

SCHOOLBOY DAYS  
IN  
RUSSIA

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A. LAURIE





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EVENTS IN THE SCHOOL-LIFE OF DMITRI TÉRENTIEFF.



# SCHOOLBOY DAYS IN RUSSIA

BY

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## SCHOOLBOY DAYS IN RUSSIA.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### A CRUSHING BLOW.

**M**Y name is Dmitri Fédorovitch Térentieff. I am just sixteen, and since Easter I have been a member of the Senior Class in Saint-Vladimir Gymnasium, Moscow, where I have been pursuing my studies for the past two years.

A most appalling and unjust accusation is now hanging over me, and it is in the depths of a gloomy dungeon that I am writing these lines. The heavily barred window that lights my cell is so small that I can scarcely see; nevertheless I shall persevere in my attempt to write my vindication, — to prove by a truthful account of my whole

life that I am entirely innocent of the terrible crime of which I am accused.

I think I know the real culprit. It is one of my college mates. A word from me would, perhaps, suffice to immure him in this gloomy prison, to which I was brought two days ago, — to make him the inmate of this damp cell infested with rats and vermin: I can hear the rats running about now, under the dirty straw that serves as my couch. He would receive from the hand of the jailer the loaf of black bread and jug of water which constitute my rations for each day; he would find his fingers and feet becoming more and more benumbed by the cold wind that blows through the bars of my window; he would wear these heavy chains; he would be the object of general distrust and suspicion.

But how can I accuse another person without proofs, especially when that other person is a schoolmate, and I have only some rather vague charges to make against him, — charges based probably to a great extent upon the antipathy and distrust with which he inspired me from the beginning of our acquaintance?

No, I suffer too much myself under this unjust accusation to be willing to incur any risk of inflicting like suffering upon another innocent person. I have no real proofs, so I shall be silent. But I may surely be allowed to speak frankly to myself; so I feel no scruples about tracing upon these pages, intended for my eye alone, the name of Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann. He is the person whom I believe to be guilty of the heinous crime of which I am accused.

I will begin by briefly narrating the events which immediately preceded my incarceration here. This is the sev-



enteenth day of April. On the morning of the fourteenth, I reached the Gymnasium about eight o'clock, as usual, and was not a little surprised to see two policemen standing outside the gate, and two more inside the courtyard.

They instantly surrounded me; and as I stood there gazing in silent amazement, first at the officers and then at my fellow-students congregated about the gateway, the sergeant asked, —

“Are you Dmitri Téreentieff?”

“That is my name.”

“Then follow me.”

Preceded by the sergeant, and closely followed by the other officers, I went up to the president's room. We found M. Pérevsky in his private office; and strange to say, this gentleman, who is usually so calm and so absorbed in thought that we call him “the moonstruck philosopher,” was striding wildly to and fro like a mad man, with his spectacles perched on the top of his head. A scrap of paper, which he crumpled nervously in his agitation, was in his hand.

As I entered the room, escorted by the policeman, M. Sarévine, the assistant superintendent, together with several of our teachers, came in by another door.

Our worthy president seated himself at his desk, and surveying me with a troubled air which I had never observed in him before, said gravely, —

“Dmitri Téreentieff, a most unfortunate affair which compromises you deeply has occurred here. You are about to be examined in regard to it. Answer all questions that may be put to you frankly, and without disguising anything. Paul Pétrovitch Sarévine, I yield the floor to you. Question the accused.”

Stunned by this ominous preamble, I did not even hear the first few questions the assistant superintendent addressed to me, but gazed at him in silence, vaguely wondering of what crime I could be suspected.

Our assistant superintendent, M. Sarévine, is a man about forty-eight years of age, a giant in stature, who always reminds me of a colonel in the Imperial Guard. He wears a long black mustache, and has bushy eyebrows that nearly cover his eyes when he is irritated, and contracts them. His severity, or rather the immense importance he attaches to discipline, amounts to positive fanaticism, and makes him a much more formidable personage than our kind-hearted president, who had sunk back in his armchair, and was surveying me with more sorrow than anger in his gaze.

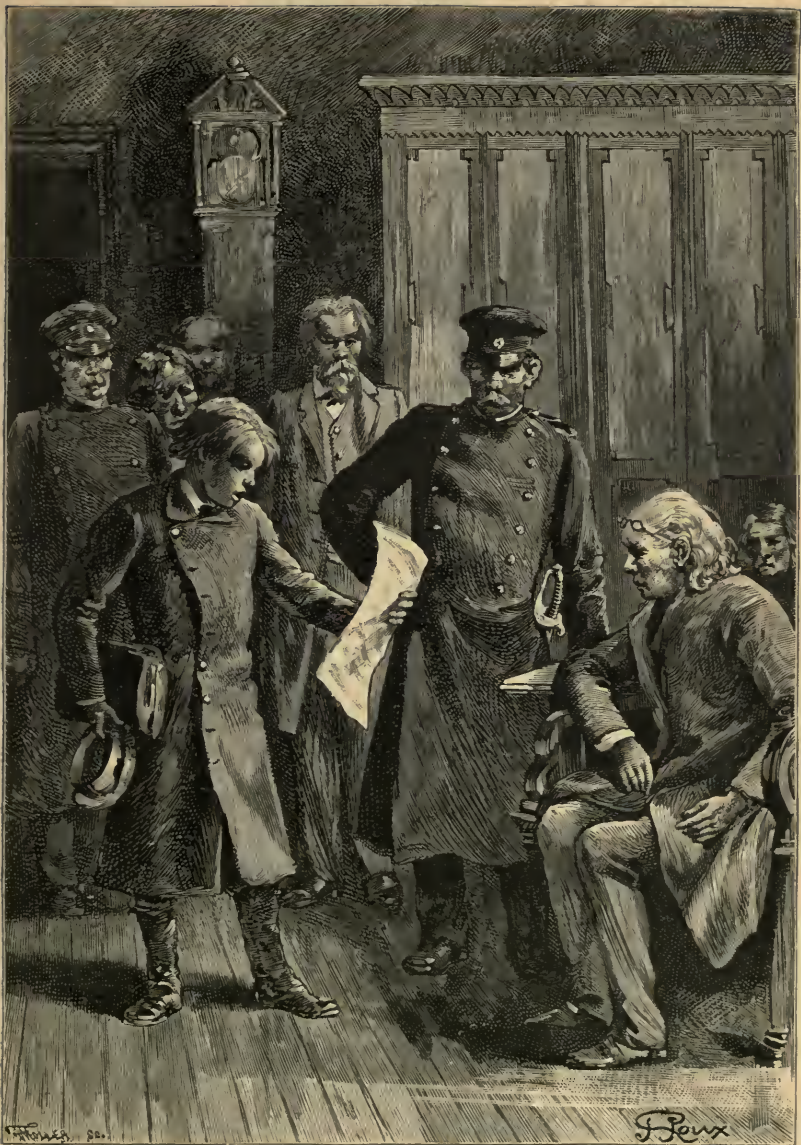
“Dmitri Téréntieff,” said M. Sarévine, omitting, intentionally perhaps, my middle name,<sup>1</sup> “look at this paper, and tell me if it belongs to you.”

My heart failed me, for it was a scrap of music paper upon which I had begun to jot down a melody of my own composition during study hours, the afternoon before, instead of preparing my lessons. Supposing I was about to be punished for this violation of rules, — a breach of discipline which our superintendent never overlooked, — it was in a faltering voice that I began to stammer out an excuse.

“Does this scrap of paper belong to you? Yes or no,” demanded M. Sarévine, sternly.

“Yes, sir.”

<sup>1</sup> In Russia, it is considered polite to add the father's Christian name to that of the son; as, Dmitri Fédorovitch Téréntieff, — that is to say, Dmitri, son of Fédor Téréntieff.



"I GAZED LONG AND SILENTLY AT THE PAPER."





“Did you write this?” continued the superintendent, showing me the other side of the sheet.

I gazed in wonder at the words inscribed upon it, for I had certainly jotted down only a few bars of music upon it the day before, having purchased the paper that very morning; but this was certainly my handwriting. I recognized the curve of my *b*'s, the little quirl with which I finish my *e*'s, and above all my capitals, which are very like those we see in type, — in short, all the peculiarities of my chirography, which is fuller, rounder, and bolder than that of the majority of my fellow students.

In my profound astonishment, I gazed long and silently at the paper, reading the following words over again and again without the slightest comprehension of their meaning: —

“Death-warrant of M. Gavručka, door-keeper at Saint-Vladimir College!”

“Answer me,” thundered M. Sarévine. “Do you recognize this scrap of paper? Was it you who penned these lines?”

“It looks like my handwriting, but I certainly did not write it,” I faltered.

“My boy, my boy, tell the truth,” interposed the president. “An offence committed thoughtlessly can be forgiven, but obstinacy and falsehood only aggravate it.”

“Ivan Alexandrovitch Pérevsky,” I responded earnestly, “my father never told an untruth, and taught me never to utter a falsehood under any circumstances. What I just said is the truth.”

“Take care!” exclaimed M. Sarévine. “I have warned you that your words may be fraught with the

gravest consequences to yourself. Do you persist in your denial?"

"Yes, sir; I did not write these words. I am even ignorant of their meaning."

"Very well," said M. Sarévine. Then, turning to a person I had not noticed before, seated in a window niche, he asked, —

"Are you taking all this down, Golovetchov?"

"Yes, in shorthand," was the response.

Behold, my former instructor in stenography was evidently acting as clerk of the investigation. Good heavens! what did all this mean?

"Bring Strodtmann in," ordered the superintendent.

My classmate was immediately ushered into the room. He is a fellow I have always disliked. He is of German descent on his father's side; Russian, on his mother's. We are about the same age. He is tall, about my height, indeed; and like me, he has light hair and wears a white cap.

Like me, too, he is one of the least gifted pupils of the senior class. He comes out of his examinations no better than I do; nor is his career as a student attended with any more brilliant success. In short, there is some resemblance between us, but the resemblance, I trust, is only superficial. In character, we are direct opposites, — at least I hope so.

At first, I could not believe that he was really going to testify against me; but I was soon undeceived.

"Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann, let us hear the facts so far as you know them," said the superintendent.

Capiton, who had been unusually pale when he entered, blushed deeply on hearing these words; and it seemed to me that he avoided my gaze.

“The facts are as follows,” he answered, in a rather careless tone. “Yesterday I devoted the last hour of the session, as usual, to the preparation of my Greek translation. There were only a few students in the room, eight or nine in all, perhaps, and among them, my classmate now present. Having occasion to look out a word in my Greek dictionary, I discovered that I had left it at home. All my classmates were using theirs except Térentieff, who was writing something on a large sheet of paper. I approached him to ask him to lend me his lexicon; and on seeing me coming he concealed the paper so I could not see what he was writing. I had time, however, to catch a glimpse of some bold letters written upon a sheet of music paper.”

“Dmitri Térentieff, do you admit the truth of this statement?” interposed M. Sarévine.

“Yes, except in regard to the bold letters written upon the paper. It was music I was writing, — notes and not words.”

“Then why did you hide the paper when your classmate approached you?”

“Because — because — it was —” I paused, greatly embarrassed. I hated so to confess the truth, — to acknowledge that this music was of my own composition. How could I confess that music was the one engrossing passion of my life? How could I confess that strange, entrancing melodies were ever transporting my soul upon their powerful pinions far, far from Greek and Latin, — far from the grim walls of Saint-Vladimir and Moscow, up to the very gates of heaven. How could I confess to these indifferent and perhaps hostile ears that I was dreaming of abandoning science for art, letters for divine

harmony; that the composition of a great symphony haunts me day and night, and that I was jotting down one of the melodies yesterday during study hours? Why should I disclose my secret to every one, and expose myself to the ridicule of my classmates and the scorn of my instructors?

I resolved to say no more.

"Your silence compromises you deeply," said M. Sarévine, after a moment. "Answer, why did you conceal the paper from your classmate?"

"I did not wish him to see what I was writing."

"And why?"

"I do not care to divulge my reasons."

A disapproving murmur resounded through the room. The president silenced it with a gesture, then, turning kindly to me, he urged me to keep nothing back; but I could not make up my mind to speak.

"Finish your deposition, Strodtmann," said the superintendent.

"I returned to my seat, and went to work again upon my translation. About five o'clock, M. Sarévine entered the study hall. I glanced at Téreنتieff, and saw him hastily slip the big sheet of paper into his desk again. M. Sarévine made his round, and went out. Dmitri Fédorovitch had his books open on the desk before him, and seemed to be studying hard all the time the superintendent was in the room. Five minutes after M. Sarévine went out, the bell sounded. Dmitri was one of the first to leave the room. He had his lunch basket under his arm, and at the time I thought it more than probable that he had placed the paper in it, and shortly afterwards I discovered that such was really the fact."

“Strodtmann is mistaken!” I exclaimed hastily; “I left the paper in my desk, under my portfolio.”

“Do not interrupt the witness,” said M. Sarévine, sternly.

“Dmitri having left without asking me for his dictionary,” continued Strodtmann, “I went to his desk to replace the book before starting for home.”

“Were any of your classmates still in the study hall?”

“No, they had all left. Gavručka, the janitor, was the only person in the room besides myself. As I opened Dmitri’s desk, I happened to think of the mysterious paper, and my curiosity having been aroused in regard to it, I thought I’d look for it.”

“This is a little too much!” I cried indignantly. “How impertinent in you to dare to rummage about among my private papers, and then boast of it, into the bargain!”

“I have already told you that you are not to interrupt the witness,” said M. Sarévine, sternly. “What followed?”

“I did not find the paper; but while I was putting things in order, our classmate, Serge Kratkine, re-entered the study hall.

“‘What are you looking for?’ he asked. ‘Why are you rummaging in Dmitri’s desk? You know very well that he won’t like it.’

“‘I am only returning his dictionary,’ I replied, thinking it advisable, quite as much on Dmitri’s account as on my own, to make no allusion to the mysterious paper which was no longer in his desk. He had evidently taken it away with him, as I suspected when I saw him leave the room.”

A wild paroxysm of anger seized me at this point in



Strodtmann's testimony. His impertinent act, and the way in which he mingled truth with falsehood in his statements, exasperated me beyond endurance.

"What do you mean?" I shouted angrily. "After being guilty of the gross outrage of tampering with my private papers in order to ferret out my secrets, how dare you lie, and say that the paper was not there? Doubtless you have stolen it; for though I have no idea of your motive in inventing all this, I know you well enough to feel certain that you are plotting some villany."

As I uttered these words in tones of frantic rage, I saw Strodtmann turn pale; and the look he bestowed upon me was so full of hatred that it astonished me, though no one else seemed to notice it.

"Your very anger is conclusive evidence against you," interrupted M. Sarévine, in tones of icy coldness. "Go on with your testimony, witness."

"But he lies, Mr. Superintendent!" I cried hotly. "He pretends that he did not find this paper, — this perfectly harmless paper, — and I solemnly swear to you that I left it in my desk, under my books, where I supposed it perfectly safe, though that was really of very little consequence, as I had written only two or three bars of music on it. Who could have had the audacity to take it and write all this nonsense, and above all, imitate my handwriting so carefully? It is incomprehensible. And if the paper was not found in my desk, where did it come from?"

"It was not in your desk that we found it, I regret to say," replied our worthy president, in grave and troubled tones. "The paper, Dmitri, was picked up this morning, in my presence, by M. Sarévine, in the room of Janitor



Gavruchka, the unfortunate victim of an assault of which you are the supposed perpetrator.”

“Gavruchka? Victim?” I repeated, without comprehending in the least.

Up to that time, Gavruchka had certainly never figured in the rôle of a victim, but rather in the rôle of a tyrant and persecutor. For years all the students, young and old, had cordially united in anathematizing this functionary, who had seemed to delight in humiliating them in every possible way; so upon hearing the president’s word, I instantly concluded that some rough trick had been played upon the unpopular janitor.

“Then some one thought to play a joke upon Gavruchka by sending him this paper, I suppose, but I know nothing at all about it,” I answered carelessly.

“The joke was a very serious one,” responded M. Sarévine, curtly. “Gavruchka was found unconscious, and to all appearance lifeless, in his room at seven o’clock this morning, and everything seems to indicate that he has been the victim of a violent assault. He has rallied a little, but he is still unable to utter a word, and it seems more than probable that he will die from the rough usage he has received, as his brain is seriously injured. Appearances are certainly very much against you, and you would do well, I think, to confess your guilt without further delay. Name your accomplices, and explain to us how a joke could have degenerated into such a heinous crime. Once more, and for the last time, I entreat you to confess all.”

I was overwhelmed with consternation by this announcement. Gavruchka lying at the point of death! and I—Dmitri Térentieff—accused of being his assassin! They could calmly announce such a fact to me! They believed

me capable of such a crime! The mere thought was enough to drive one mad. For a moment my head whirled wildly round and round; then a terrible darkness seemed to settle down upon me, and like one in a dream I listened to the testimony of the other witnesses.

Serge Arcadiévitch Kratkine, my most intimate friend, was next summoned. He confirmed Strodtmann's testimony in relation to his return to the study hall, and stated that he and Strodtmann left the building together. Serge felt sure that I was innocent; but he had no proof of it, and was even compelled to admit that the writing corresponded with mine in every particular. Several of my classmates, among them Grichine Yégov, testified likewise.

Afterwards one of the policemen gave his testimony. He declared that he had seen me enter the janitor's room about eight o'clock the evening before. He recognized me perfectly. I was wearing the same clothing, and the same white cap.

"What brought you here last evening?" asked our superintendent.

I had no difficulty in answering this question. It was only necessary for me to tell the truth.

"On returning home last evening I discovered that I had forgotten my Greek dictionary," I replied. "I had lent it to Strodtmann, as he told you a few minutes ago; and as I had not even looked at my translation for this morning, I—"

"What were you doing in study hour?"

"With such a grave charge hanging over me, I can no longer hesitate to tell you. I spent the entire study hour in jotting down a melody which was running in my head, and which prevented me from thinking of my translation;

so I resolved to prepare it in the evening at home, and it was in the hope that Gavručka would allow me to enter the study hall, and get my dictionary, that I returned here. I rapped at the small door on the right of the main entrance, the one leading directly into the janitor's room. Gavručka opened the door himself. I entered, and made known my request; but he absolutely refused to open the classroom, saying it was contrary to rules, so I left immediately afterwards."

"How long did you remain in Gavručka's room?" inquired the president.

"One minute, perhaps; two, at the very longest."

"Did you see the accused leave the building?" asked M. Sarévine, turning to the policeman.

"No, or at least not alone. After I saw him enter the janitor's room, I walked on to the end of this street, and then down the next street. This took me at least a half hour, and I forgot all about the young man until, finding myself about fifty yards from the college about quarter of twelve o'clock, I saw the side door cautiously open, and three young men come out. One was tall, just about Téreنتieff's height and size, I should say; the others were much smaller. They all wore long coats, and were muffled up to their very eyes. The tallest of the three wore the white cap of a senior student. Surprised to see them coming out of the building at that hour of the night, I concluded to follow them. They walked very rapidly, and parted without exchanging a word, at the corner of the next street. I continued to follow the tall one, and as he passed a street-lamp, I could see that he had light hair. In fact, I feel certain that it was the same young man I had seen entering the building about eight o'clock.

Nevertheless, I must admit that the witness Strodtmann has hair of the same color, and that he looks almost as much like the young man I followed last night as the accused does."

I glanced at my fellow student as the officer uttered these words; and seeing that his face was absolutely livid in hue, there flashed across my mind a hasty, but none the less firm conviction that he was the real culprit, but that he had resolved to cast the odium of the crime upon me.

I glanced at the other persons present, but to my great surprise, no one seemed to notice his agitation.

"I followed the young man as far as the Pétrovska," continued the officer. "There, he either slipped around some dark corner or hastily entered a house, for all at once I lost sight of him. Having no special reason to suspect him of any mischief, I abandoned the pursuit, and probably should have forgotten all about it, if our sergeant had not been hastily summoned here this morning. I accompanied him. On our arrival, we found the president and the superintendent in the janitor's room, bending over the apparently lifeless body of Gavruchka. The unfortunate man was in a kneeling posture, with his forehead resting upon a table, his eyes closely bandaged, his hands securely tied behind him, and a wet towel, twisted like a rope, on the back of his neck. On the floor beside him lay the paper with his death-warrant written upon it. I watched the pupils as they entered the building this morning, and without the slightest difficulty identified Térentieff as the young man who entered the janitor's room at eight o'clock last evening; but I was not able to identify the persons who were in company with him when he left the building about midnight."

The officer's testimony seemed unanswerable. How could I vindicate myself? How prove that I was not one of the party that left the institution at midnight? If Gavruchka could only speak!

"Do you persist in saying that you left the janitor's room almost immediately?" inquired the president.

"Yes, sir, immediately; but when I came out, I saw nothing of the policeman, though I noticed him when I entered the building. The street was deserted. I do not remember to have met a single person."

"Where did you spend the evening?"

"I intended to return home and prepare my translation, but this being impossible without a dictionary, I attended the concert at the *Porte Dorée*, where I remained until nearly midnight."

"What seat did you occupy?"

"I purchased a ticket for the third gallery at the office as I went in."

"What pieces of music did you hear?"

"The instrumental selections consisted of the Beethoven's *Symphonie Héroïque*, a selection from *The Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz, Brahms's waltzes, and a melody of Rubenstein."

"He could easily have learned all this merely by reading the program," said M. Sarévine, in tones which, though subdued, were nevertheless distinctly audible. "At what hour did you reach home?"

"About quarter of twelve."

"Did you speak to any one?"

"Only to the porter of the house on the *Pétrovska* where I live."

"Ah, so you live on the *Pétrovska*?" exclaimed the



superintendent, exchanging glances with the officer. "If you can mention no one who saw and recognized you at the concert, you will find yourself in a pretty bad plight."

"You must see for yourself, Dmitri, that all the evidence is against you," said our worthy president, sadly. "Once more let me entreat you to confess the truth, and name your accomplices."

"I am innocent, sir; I have no accomplices. I swear it upon my honor. I know nothing about the affair. It was from you that I first heard of the sorry state in which Gavručka was found. When I saw him last, about eight o'clock yesterday evening, he was in perfect health."

The president sighed heavily as he rose from his chair. "Do your duty, gentlemen," he said, turning to the officers. "The course the accused has chosen to adopt compels us to abandon him. You may rest assured that we shall do our best to discover his accomplices."

The sergeant approached me.

"In the name of the Czar I arrest you," he said gruffly.

Almost at the same instant handcuffs were deftly fastened about my wrists, and I found myself descending the stairs between two policemen. A group of curious and excited classmates had assembled at the foot of the main stairway to await the return of those who had been summoned as witnesses, and a feeling of rage and humiliation seized me at the thought that they would see me thus disgraced.

The majority of them were silent, though their countenances evinced deep compassion; some few, however, desirous probably of freeing themselves from any possible suspicion of complicity, drew away with a horrified air at my approach.

But as I was crossing the courtyard, my dear friend



Serge Kratkine ran up to me, and threw his arms around my neck.

“Courage!” he cried; “you are innocent; I know it, and I will never desert you!”

Several other classmates, among them Grichine Yégov, came up and shook hands with me.

Ten minutes more, and I was in prison. I do not know what my fate will be. I shall doubtless be examined again in a few days, and then be formally tried in a public court.

Since I have been confined here I seem to have lived my whole life over again. Recollections of the happy days of my childhood haunt me continually, and it seems to me that my past life furnishes my best means of defence. Perhaps a truthful, unvarnished account of my past acts and feelings will aid me in vindicating myself.

But it is growing late. Daylight has nearly faded from my cell, and I am obliged to pause. I shall resume this story of my life to-morrow, — or rather begin to jot down my recollections of my childhood. At all events, it will serve to enliven the dreariness of my captivity, which threatens to be a lengthy one. I have asked for and obtained a sufficient quantity of pens, ink, and paper.

The shades of night are settling down upon me. I can hear the rats running about in the straw. They must be very numerous, judging from the inroads they have made upon my loaf. A shudder creeps over me. Can it be that I am afraid?

No! Dmitri Fédorovitch Téreentieff should know no fear. He is the son of an honest man; he is entirely innocent of the crime of which he is accused; and a tranquil conscience is the best of pillows, even upon the damp straw of a rat-infested dungeon.

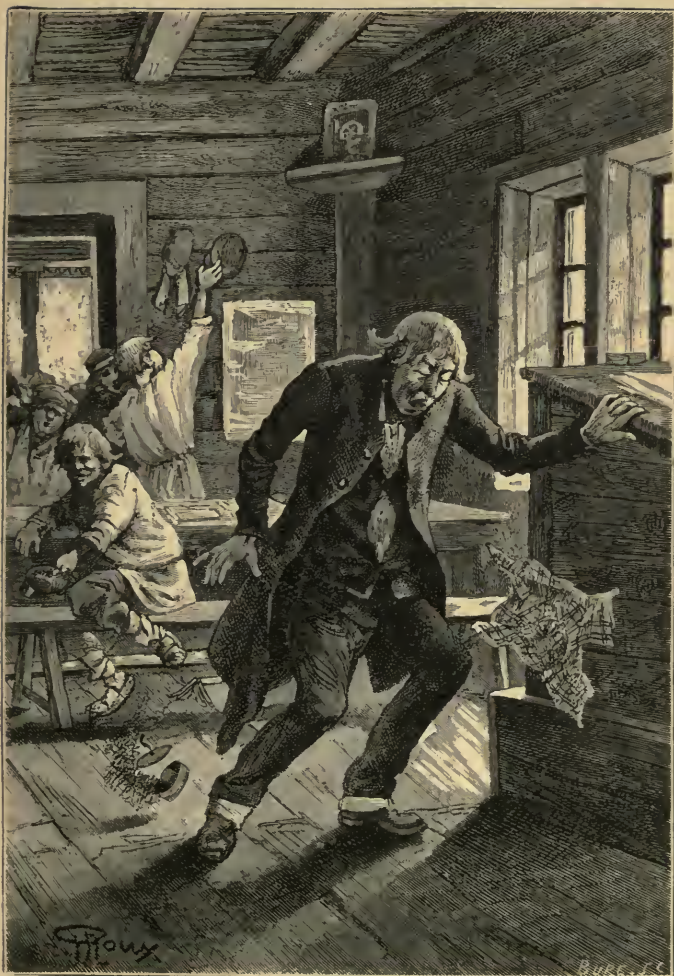
## CHAPTER II.

### RECOLLECTIONS OF MY CHILDHOOD.

MY very earliest recollections are of my father's cottage, my birthplace. It stood alone at a turn in the road, surrounded by a neglected garden and a few dilapidated sheds and outbuildings, on the outskirts of an obscure Russian village.

It was quite a distance from the other houses, which were grouped irregularly around the manorial mansion. This mansion, as well as all the country for miles around, belonged to a wealthy and eccentric widow, the Princess Lebanoff, who spent most of the year in St. Petersburg, exiling herself in Sitovka only when the necessity of collecting her rents in person compelled her to make such a sacrifice. The windows of the château were always closed except during her rare visits, and the large park merely served as a playground for us village boys, in spite of her steward's efforts to prevent this abuse. The poor man was highly indignant, and his complaints, in which he was heartily joined by the village schoolmaster, a German, were loud and frequent.

Among the young rascals who nearly tormented the life out of the old schoolmaster, as well as Mme. Lebanoff's steward, I must admit that I was first and foremost.



“CAYENNE PEPPER STUNG HIS NOSTRILS AND FILLED HIS EYELIDS WITH BLINDING TEARS.”



If a leader was needed in a campaign against those in authority, I was always ready. In fact, I displayed a fertility of imagination and an aptitude for reversing the usual order of things in the schoolroom, that amaze me, even now. If Master Johann Lebewohl furtively inserted two fingers in his snuff-box, and then raised them to his nose, a pinch of cayenne pepper stung his nostrils, and filled his eyes with blinding tears. The culprits usually took advantage of the confusion that ensued to crawl stealthily along under the benches to the door, and then make good their escape.

When the victim recovered his breath and looked around for the authors of his misfortunes, we were out of his reach, and he was obliged to vent his wrath upon the innocent, who, in spite of the frequent recurrence of this and similar scenes, remained indifferent alike to his sufferings and his reproaches. The Russian peasant is endowed from infancy with an unconquerable sluggishness and stoicism; so although Master Lebewohl administered blows right and left indiscriminately, in his fiery wrath and indignation, the boys accepted them with resignation, consoling themselves with the proverb, "The heavens are high above us, and the czar far away," — merely another way of saying that one should bear one's wrongs patiently, and never rebel against the inevitable.

The very next day, perhaps, the master would endeavor to inscribe on the blackboard the words or figures required for the elucidation of some difficult problem in mathematics, but not a mark could he make. The entire surface of the blackboard was covered with a gluey substance that checked the deftly handled crayon in the very beginning of its arabesques; or he found his pen firmly embedded in



the inkstand; or the stick with which he held us in subjection was missing. As he was a teacher who could not possibly teach without a stick under his arm, the rest of the session was spent in vainly searching for it, and as no power on earth could keep us prisoners after school hours, we rushed out of the room like a drove of unruly colts when the clock indicated the appointed time.

The stick was subsequently found hidden in the master's bed, or half consumed in the stove, greatly to his disgust.

"It is another trick of that accursed Dmitri Fédorovitch," he would growl; and it must be confessed that he was generally right in considering me the cause of his troubles.

In fact, I had a deep aversion to study, and to all authority, except that exercised by my father. I was really happy only when I was roaming about the fields alone, and drinking in the cold, exhilarating air of the steppes. I had no intimate friend among my classmates; they merely served as my tools in playing tricks upon the master. My liberty once secured, I deserted them without a word, and rushed off to spend the rest of the day wandering through the fields and forest. With my hands buried deep in my trousers' pockets, I strolled aimlessly on, dreaming all sorts of wild, fantastic dreams, but never once feeling the need of a companion or confidant. Nothing more was seen of me until night, when I returned as hungry as a wolf, and re-entered the house as tranquilly as if my conduct had been irreproachable.

"So here you are at last, Dmitri!" my father would exclaim, from the depths of his shabby old armchair. "You have played truant all day. I can see it in your face. You will always be an incorrigible dunce, I fear; but after all,



my boy, the wisest thing you can do, perhaps, is to amass a goodly store of health and strength."

And then my kind father would sink wearily back in his armchair. He was an exceedingly weak and delicate man, made of entirely different clay from the *moujiks*<sup>1</sup> of Sitovka, and also from myself, a sturdy, uncouth lad who could have lifted him off his feet without the slightest effort, it seemed to me, and I entertained the deepest tenderness and respect for him.

My father was a physician. At the age of twenty, and before he gained his diploma unfortunately, he married his cousin, Alexandra Pavlovna Latkine, the daughter of an impoverished nobleman, who had died leaving her homeless and penniless. The young student and his wife lived for awhile in Moscow, in a state of extreme poverty; but shortly after my father won his degree, he inherited from a distant relative the old cottage and bit of ground near Sitovka; and thankful for any place of shelter, however humble, they decided to take up their abode there. It was there where I first opened my eyes to the light, and where my mother died soon after my birth.

My father was endowed with rare intelligence and ability, as his attainments and scientific researches testified; and in spite of the many difficulties that beset his pathway in life, he succeeded in gaining an enviable reputation in the scientific world; but after my mother's death, his health, which had been seriously undermined before, gave way entirely. Depressed in spirits, discouraged, made prematurely old by care and anxiety, and feeling he had but a short time to live, he resolved to spend the rest of his days in seclusion at Sitovka.

<sup>1</sup> Peasants.

Every morning, he climbed into his rickety *télegue*,<sup>1</sup> drawn by a shaggy little pony, and started on his round of visits. I can see him now, wrapped in his long rough overcoat, the coarse texture of which only made the delicacy of his features more noticeable. He had long, silky, blond hair, and slender, beautifully formed hands, and he was the personification of all that was noble and refined in my eyes. I cared for nobody in the world but him; and though I was often rude and belligerent toward others, I was always as submissive and affectionate as a daughter to him. He, in turn, was ever kind and indulgent to me; and though he sometimes expostulated with me in regard to my conduct, it seemed to me that he was never really annoyed by my delinquencies.

That being the case, what did I care for the opinion of others? His contempt would have been intolerable; but what Master Lebewohl or any one else thought of me was a matter of supreme indifference. I only knew that my father detested cowardice and deceit; so I never stooped to either, but in every other respect, I did as I pleased. I had noticed that he seemed to take pleasure in seeing me strong and agile, so I devoted a great deal of my time and attention to all sorts of physical exercises, such as running, leaping, climbing, riding all the horses in the neighborhood bare-backed, and trying to lift heavier weights from day to day; so, although I was a perfect ignoramus at the age of ten years — I scarcely knew how to read and write — I was so well developed physically, that one would have supposed me to be at least fourteen or fifteen years old.

I knew but one thing passably well. That was French, which my father — like all educated Russians — had

<sup>1</sup> A light, four-wheeled, open wagon.

spoken from infancy, and which I had learned from him without much effort on my part.

My father often amused himself by drawing comparisons between himself and me. He seemed to take genuine pleasure in comparing my big sturdy fists, stalwart shoulders, and broad, full chest with his own slender, bowed form. It was evidently a great comfort to him to see me so healthy and vigorous. The fact is, we did not resemble each other in the least. I flattered myself that I should be tall like him, but there the resemblance would cease; for there was nothing in my ruddy face, tanned by constant exposure to the wind and sun, and surrounded with thick masses of bushy hair cut straight across the forehead, to remind one of my father's pale, attenuated features.

In short, Fédor Illitch, my father, was not only a student, but a student whose mind was much too active for his frail body, while I — well, there seemed to be no reason to apprehend any danger of that kind, so far as I was concerned.

We lived alone together, my father and I, in our tumble-down cottage. We kept no servant, and I took care of our little horse, *Vodka*, — I had given him the name of the liquor made from fermented grain, and so universally used in Russia, his violent and irascible disposition making it a very appropriate appellation, in my opinion.

Many a fine gallop we have had together, *Vodka* and I, when my father had no use for him, for I had succeeded in mastering him, at least partially.

Sometimes I amused myself by plaiting his mane and tail with bits of bright-hued braid given me by some of the farmers' daughters in the neighborhood. When I had thus adorned him, I frequently erected a canopy of leafy

bought over the seat of the *télègue*, thus enabling my father to make his round of visits sheltered from the cruel sun, — for the heat of a Russian summer is overpowering, and the invalid suffered much more from it than he was willing to admit.

I well remember the pang that pierced my heart, in spite of my apparent high spirits, when I heard my father's sepulchral cough, and saw his forehead beaded with sweat, and the handkerchief he raised to his lips stained with blood. I know now that he needed constant care, and a life of ease and luxury. Doubtless a different life from that we led would have greatly prolonged his days. Instead of that, we lived like the poorest peasant, subsisting chiefly on rye bread and salt fish, and tasting meat only once or twice a year.

It was only when I felt in the mood for cooking that I prepared a bowl of warm *racha*,<sup>1</sup> against my father's return. I know not what would have become of the dear man under this *régime*, if he had not had his tea to console him. He drank it continually, after the manner of the Russian peasantry; that is to say, by taking a mouthful from his glass and then nibbling the lump of sugar held in the other hand.

I always picture him seated in his shabby armchair, his face, which was still handsome, though wasted by illness, bent over some ponderous tome. He glanced up occasionally, but it was merely to fill his cup from the samovar<sup>2</sup> that sang so blithely by his side, or to address a remark to me, —

“It is cold to-night, Mitia,<sup>3</sup> very cold! Come nearer the fire.”

<sup>1</sup> Porridge made of rye or buckwheat.

<sup>2</sup> Tea-urn.

<sup>3</sup> The diminutive of Dmitri.

He shivered constantly, though he sat close by the stove; but I was never cold, and though I took care to keep up a roaring fire, it was solely on his account. At night, he wrapped himself in a sheepskin robe, and stretching himself out on an old leather-covered lounge near the stove, he tried in vain to sleep.

As for me, I climbed on the huge stove, Russian fashion, and curling myself up like a big dog, I slept the sound, dreamless sleep of youth and perfect health.

When morning dawned, I jumped down from my perch, filled up the still warm stove, which was soon roaring gayly, made my father's tea; then arming myself with a birch broom, I put the house in order. It was not always very thoroughly done, I admit; but untidiness and disorder annoyed my father so much that I certainly felt a strong desire to perform my task creditably. It was to please him, too, that I bathed myself every morning from head to foot in cold water, and brushed my clothes and his.

Afterwards I ate a crust of bread with the best of appetites, and after placing some mush intended for my father on the fire, I considered myself free for the rest of the day; for though I knew perfectly well that it was my duty to go straight to school, and there consume my daily allowance of arithmetic and geography, I felt no scruples about evading this duty almost constantly. I always had some good excuse to offer. The weather was much too fine to think of shutting oneself up in a schoolroom. Our Russian summers are so short, that one ought to make the most of them. September is a month of incomparable beauty with us. How many Septembers should I see in my life? Only a very limited number, and I would have



all the other months of the year to study. Away then to the fields! In winter, it was too cold. I must needs indulge in some violent exercise to keep warm. In the spring, the weather was too warm; besides, I wanted to study the revival of nature. In short, no season seemed to be adapted to study, but all to idleness.

It is only right to say in my own defence that though I was a poor student, I knew every inch of the surrounding country, and was perfectly familiar with the habits of its denizens. I had studied the customs and tricks of the birds for hours together. I knew the tree in which they preferred to build their nest, its shape, and the number of pink, gray, or blue eggs deposited there; I knew the hour at which the foxes start out on their foraging expeditions; I knew all the haunts of the ferret, the polecat, and even the shy partridge; I knew the hiding-place of the grouse, and the pond the wild ducks most frequented. I certainly would have been an invaluable guide to a hunter; but no one hunted in our neighborhood. We had no lord of the manor, and neither my father nor the schoolmaster cared for sport. I had never even had a gun in my hand; and though I occasionally killed a bird for my father's dinner, it was invariably by means of a sling shot.

As I have remarked before, I had no intimate friends among the lads of the village, nor do I know why we were so uncongenial. Elderly men generally regarded me as a headstrong, idle fellow; the elderly women disliked me because I often played jokes on them; their daughters, because I made fun of them when they went to church arrayed in all their finery, to show themselves to the young men; and the boys of my own age cared as little for me as I did for them.



There was but one occupation of which I was really fond. Our *pope*,<sup>1</sup> Agathon Illarionovitch Poliakoff, had organized a church choir. He himself—like most members of the Russian clergy, so far as my observation goes—possessed a remarkably powerful and flexible bass voice, which he used very effectively in the church service. I, whether I was alone or in company, always had a song on my lips. If words were lacking, I improvised them, putting my own ideas to any tune that chanced to come into my head. I could whistle like a blackbird, and there was no bird in the forest whose notes I could not imitate well enough to deceive his fellows. The good priest had noticed the compass and sonorousness of my voice, and chosen me as a member of his choir. On the eve of every church festival, I went to his house to practise; and I recollect what pleasure it afforded me to hear my voice rise sweet and clear in the *acauthiste*,—a chant glorifying Christ and the Virgin, which Agathon Illarionovitch made me sing on the feast of the Nativity. I see again the dingy little church, whose only adornments consisted of a few dilapidated *icones*;<sup>2</sup> and Agathon, tall and majestic, with his black beard reaching down to his waist, made the very rafters ring with his powerful voice, while mine, crystalline in its clearness, soared higher and higher, and up to the very gates of heaven, it seemed to me. I became as intoxicated with my trills and *roulades* as any nightingale, and Agathon and I made up for the deficiencies of all the rest, for I was the only lad in Sitovka who possessed any voice or ear for music. All the others

<sup>1</sup> The title given to a parish priest in the Greek Church.

<sup>2</sup> Sacred images always placed in churches and in a corner of each room in Russia. Persons salute them on entering and departing.

sang terribly out of tune, and stoutly rebelled against any musical instruction whatever.

So Father Agathon held me in high esteem, and often dropped in of an evening to warm himself by our fire for an hour or two, and to drink innumerable cups of tea with my father. The pope's house was, if possible, even more bare and desolate than ours. Akoulina Ivanova, his wife, was cross and fault-finding. His sons Luke and Porphyre were clumsy, ungainly fellows. Luke, the elder of the two, had decided to become a priest, like his father ; but his lack of enthusiasm as well as of fitness for the calling always amaze me when I think of it.

Porphyre, the younger son, a big, moon-faced, freckled fellow about my own age, with tiny eyes that were almost concealed from view by the plumpness of his cheeks, had constituted himself my Pylades, and my *alter ego* ; though why he should have done so, I really cannot tell.

Wherever I went, he was sure to follow, in spite of my vehement protests ; and just when I was beginning to think myself well rid of him, I generally discovered him following in my track like a dog. Even when I explained to him that I preferred to be alone, and that his company was irksome to me, it made no difference whatever. Porphyre had resolved that we should be friends, and in spite of continual rebuffs, he remained my shadow.

I cannot imagine what satisfaction he found in it ; in fact, I often asked him that very question, for his persistency incensed me so much that I did not pay much regard to his feelings. I very rarely spoke to him, except to make fun of him. The poor fellow was awkwardness personified ; his every movement was attended with some catastrophe. If he tried to skate, the ice gave way under him, and he

fell into the water; if he went fishing, he invariably pitched headlong to the bottom of the river; and if he approached the gentlest horse, he was sure to be kicked. Even the village geese pursued him with savage cries. He scalded himself in drinking his tea; he choked himself when he ate, and tore his clothes twenty times a day, to his mother's intense disgust; in short, he was the clumsiest and most unfortunate being on earth.

He bore all his misfortunes with inexhaustible patience however, merely remarking occasionally, with a wondering air, —

“Luck is always against me, you see.”

Poor Agathon Illarionovitch! I often wonder what has become of him. Does he still wear the same long, soiled, snuff-colored cassock dangling forlornly against his dilapidated boots, which he shared with all the rest of the family, after the old Russian fashion?<sup>1</sup> I believe that music was the only thing that consoled him for the manifold trials of his life. He taught me a host of melodies, which I sang over and over again at the top of my voice, during my wanderings. It is needless to say that I was superstitious, as all good Russians are sure to be; and often when I found myself alone in the gloomy forest, or on the steppes, I sang, I must confess, not so much from a love of music as to drive away the evil spirits that haunt the forest, — the mocking gnomes and the water nymphs, who have no power over man unless they can succeed in enticing him into the heart of their own kingdom. They endeavor to do this by their singing, which is even sweeter than that of

<sup>1</sup> One pair of boots generally serves for an entire family, — father, mother, and children. The women, who often wear a small fortune in jewelry, have no decent shoes, and peasants usually wrap their feet up in rags.

the skylark. But I — to circumvent them — sang so loud that the wretches could not make themselves heard. I even drove away by my singing the mischievous goblin who plays so many tricks upon people, the uncanny sprite who entices belated travellers from the most familiar paths by the dancing, flickering light he waves before them, luring them straight on to the cold and dismal marsh where his unhappy victims sink to rise no more. The sacred melodies of our church service deprive these evil spirits of their power, and make them flee in hot haste to their secret haunts.

Truly one sees and hears marvellous things in the gloom of our gigantic forests!

## CHAPTER III.

### THE HAUNTED LAKE.

THE summer of that year had been unusually pleasant. The month of September was fast drawing to a close, and already a silvery sheen was visible mornings on the tall trees whose russet foliage contrasted so charmingly with the pale blue of the cloudless sky. A profound stillness reigned everywhere, and the impending death of nature imparted a melancholy charm to the beauty of the landscape.

I left home very early one morning, for I had an unusually exciting scheme in my head. A long way from Sitovka — much farther than I had ever gone indeed — there was a lake which I had long desired to visit. By walking briskly, I might reach it by the middle of the day, and explore it thoroughly during the afternoon; but I could hardly hope to get home again until late at night. It is needless to say that this prospect did not trouble me in the least; but I took good care to keep my project a secret from my father, partly because I was naturally uncommunicative, but chiefly because I felt almost sure that he would not allow me to go. I started off with a big piece of rye-bread and a magnificent fresh cucumber in my pocket, — a breakfast for a prince! I should find plenty of water by the wayside to quench my thirst.



As I was passing through the village I saw the master standing by the schoolhouse door.

"Dmitri, Dmitri Fédorovitch, the bell has rung!" he called out sharply.

I pretended not to hear him, however.

"Dmitri! don't you hear me? The bell has rung, I tell you!"

"I hear you, Master Lebewohl," I answered, pausing for an instant, with my hands stuck in my trousers' pockets.

"Come here, then," cried the master, flourishing his stick, as if he longed to apply it to my shoulders.

"I'm not coming to school to-day," I responded coolly, resuming my journey.

"What do you mean, you good-for-nothing? Don't you intend to come when I call you?"

But I only shrugged my shoulders, and walked swiftly on.

"Those hateful Germans are all alike," I thought contemptuously. "They are always trying to shut us up and make us as stupid as themselves. But thank Heaven, I am a Russian!"

And I continued my journey, enchanted with life and with myself.

I soon reached the forest that bounded our village on the east. Here the only sound that broke the stillness was the ring of the woodman's axe attacking some large tree; but as I walked on, even this sound became fainter and fainter, until it finally died away altogether in the distance. All around me giant birches and ash-trees reared their tall forms heavenward, the dull tints of their bark making the bright hues of their foliage appear even more brilliant. Birds flitted blithely from branch to branch;

ever and anon a bushy-tailed squirrel ran across the path in front of me; and beautiful flowers bloomed on every side, while at the base of many large trees there was a luxuriant growth of mushrooms of even more gorgeous coloring than the flowers. To each denizen of this primeval forest I addressed, in turn, a few friendly remarks.

“Yes, brother,” I said to the squirrel, “lay up a good store of nuts for winter use. You’ll need them for at least nine months, you poor little creature! Take good care, too, that the cunning old wolf does n’t catch you! Sing on, pretty bird, sing on, while the sunshine lasts! Soon we shall find your little bodies cold and lifeless in the snow, — and you will not revive again in the spring time, like your sisters, the flowers. It seems hard that you must die, — you, who are so gay and full of life; but it is some comfort to think that you do not know what is in store for you!”

When I reached the farther edge of the forest, I saw by the position of the sun in the heavens that it was past mid-day; so I seated myself on the edge of a little brook whose waters were of crystalline clearness, and ate my lunch with great enjoyment.

As I ate, I laughed at the recollection of the school-master’s rueful countenance.

“That poor idiot of a German does n’t know how delightful it is to roam about through the woods and fields,” I soliloquized. “He never leaves his stuffy old cottage except to smoke his pipe on his doorstep, and even then he always has a book in his hand. I can’t imagine what he finds so very interesting in his books. Perhaps they tell about the poor wretches who never have any winter. I wonder how those French people stand it. Father has

told me about that Bonapartichko<sup>1</sup> who came here to destroy our homes and take Moscow. But our good soldiers sent him back to his own country on the double-quick. I wish I had been living in those days! How I should have enjoyed knocking him on the head with a stout cudgel! But our brave prince Mikailo Illarionovitch Smolenski, with God's help, did it without me."

My ideas of history were certainly very vague. I was about nine years old at the time, and my father often laughed heartily at my ignorance then, and afterwards.

"He will have plenty of time to learn all that," he remarked one day to the schoolmaster. "He is bright enough, and so obstinate, that when he takes it into his head to study, he will come out as well as any of them. Is n't that so, Mitia?"

"Yes, Father."

"You are going to know a great deal some day, eh?"

"Yes, Father, as much as you know."

"But how are you going to learn it? By sleeping and eating?"

"Oh, no, I shall take your books and read them."

"But what if you are not able to read them? They are written in French and Greek and Latin."

"Then I shall send for a Frenchman and just say to him, 'Teach me your lingo;' and if he refuses I'll knock him down."

And my father laughed as poor Lebewohl departed, wringing his hands and exclaiming,—

"What savages! Good heavens! what savages!"

But one day—I was listening to their conversation,

<sup>1</sup> A contemptuous name for Bonaparte.

though I did not let them know it — I heard my father explain his theory.

“Don’t lose patience, *Diédouchka*,”<sup>1</sup> he said pleasantly to the schoolmaster. “You see what I am, — a broken-down consumptive, who goes around wheezing and coughing worse than any old horse, though I am not much over thirty years of age. I have never known what it is to be really well, and all on account of the life I led as a child. I was born delicate, and needed an outdoor life and plenty of room and freedom. Instead of that, I grew up in a town, and studied hard from my earliest childhood, only to discover toward the end of my days, that what I know is nothing in comparison with what I do not know. I don’t want it to be so with this boy; I want him to know, at least during the early years of his life, what real enjoyment is, — mere animal enjoyment, you may call it if you like, — but the genuine happiness and enjoyment that health and strength and freedom alone can give. I have succeeded, — the lad is hardy and honest and strong. He is no more stupid than many of your so-called prodigies; and if I am spared a few years longer, I shall have no difficulty in convincing him how disgraceful it would be for a grown man to live in ignorance. I have no fears for his future, for I firmly believe that the superb health with which I have endowed him will be of invaluable assistance to him in his future studies. Ah, if I but dared to hope that I might live until he reached the age of twenty, I should have no cause to blush for him, I am satisfied of that!”

It seems to me I can hear him now. My beloved father! no; you shall have no cause to blush for your

<sup>1</sup> “Dear little uncle,” an appellation familiarly applied to elderly persons in Russia.

son, — I swear it! — And if you could read my heart, you would not blush for me even now, in spite of the ignominious position in which I find myself. I never told you an untruth. You, at least, would not doubt my word. You would feel sure of my innocence.

But to resume my story: refreshed by my repast, I rose to my feet, and casting a last lingering look at the cool, shady forest, I directed my steps toward a high hill some distance off, on the other side of which lay the lake I had long desired to visit.

This sheet of water bore a very unenviable reputation, however. It was rumored that a traveller had been murdered upon its shores many years before; that his body had been cast into its dark waters; and that his voice could be distinctly heard on calm nights, and those whom he called by name must expect to die during the year. For this reason it was known as the Haunted Lake, and it played quite an important part in the legends of our village.

It was also considered a very dangerous spot on account of the many quicksands which bordered it, and in which one's feet sank deeper and deeper until the black, slimy mud closed over one's head. It was useless to struggle, or cling to the tall rushes that grew there in such profusion, — for having no roots, they yielded to your touch; and the treacherous slime rose higher and higher until one disappeared from sight, and only the widening circles on the silent surface of the gloomy lake revealed one's horrible fate.

I had long been tormented by a desire to visit the spot. I would be so prudent! I had no fears that the quicksands would engulf me, with my trusty stick to test each

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foot of ground before I ventured upon it, and with my new shoes made of bark, in which I felt as light as a fawn.

I walked steadily on toward the hill, through the luxuriant growth of flowers and reeds that covered the plain; but strange to say, as I advanced, the eminence seemed to be farther and farther away, and by the time I reached the summit the sun was nearing the horizon, and I was very tired.

I paused for a moment to rest and gaze eagerly at the untried but alluring region that stretched before me. Yes, there lay the famous lake at the foot of a small mountain, its waters sparkling brightly in the oblique rays of the fast declining sun, and bordered on the side nearest me by a dense belt of gloomy pines. There lay the Haunted Lake; but I must needs make haste if I wished to reach it, explore its shores, and return to Sitovka before my father became alarmed at my prolonged absence.

It took me only a few moments to descend the hill, so I soon found myself among the pines, and I must confess that my heart throbbed a little faster than usual as I made my way through these grim and motionless sentinels; but nothing could have induced me to turn back now, or even to admit to myself that the decidedly creepy feeling that stole over me was fear.

But after all, the coward who realizes his terror, but conquers it and marches straight into danger, is more worthy of admiration than the hero who courts it without a change of color, merely because the sensation of fear is unknown to him. Without troubling myself in the least about these subtle distinctions however, I hastened on, and at last reached the lake, whose deep and motionless waters were now of almost inky blackness in the gathering twilight.

Several immense birds of prey were circling slowly through the air above it, and the whole scene was inexpressibly gloomy and awe-inspiring.

Suddenly, as I stood leaning against the trunk of a large tree, surveying the dark waters with fascinated eyes, a sharp, wild, despairing cry broke the profound stillness.

The blood curdled in my veins, and my knees shook under me. Was it the murdered man calling me? I was lost! With a trembling hand I made the sign of the cross, and turned to flee, when the shrill wail resounded again, and this time I clearly distinguished the words, —

“Mamouchka! Mamouchka!”<sup>1</sup>

I was ashamed of myself. All my fears vanished, as if by magic, and I blushed to the very roots of my hair at the thought of my cowardice. Without any further hesitation I dashed off through the briars and bushes, in the direction from which the sound had seemed to proceed, and a deplorable sight soon greeted my eyes.

A woman clothed in rags was lying motionless on the ground. Beside her knelt a little girl about four years old, who was trying to arouse her by plaintive cries, and to lift the head, which fell back inertly upon the ground after each attempt.

I instinctively felt that the poor woman was dead; but how long had she lain there? Where could she and the child have come from? The little girl was clad in a shabby old pelisse, and her long dark hair streamed from beneath a tattered red handkerchief down over her face and eyes. She was so slender and so dark complexioned, with her delicate features and immense eyes, that at first I was inclined to take her for a witch's child. Certainly the

<sup>1</sup> “Little mother.”

tiny creature possessed none of the characteristics of the popular type of Russian beauty, — namely, a plump pink and white face, with coral lips, flaxen hair, and large, broad feet to furnish a substantial support for the body. The child had raised her head on hearing a crackling sound in the bushes, and her lustrous, dark eyes were now riveted on my face. For a minute or two I stood silent and motionless, so intense was my astonishment.

“Come and wake Mamouchka,” she called out to me suddenly. “She is sleeping too long.”

She spoke very indistinctly, and I scarcely know how I managed to understand her; but I did, and in another moment I was kneeling by the dead woman’s side. I took her cold and rigid hand gently in mine, then silently replaced it on the ground. She was dead; there could be no doubt of it.

“Where did you come from?” I asked gently.

“From over there,” replied the child, vaguely.

“And where are the others? Had you no companions?”

“No; they went with the horses.”

I had already noticed that the grass around us was much trampled, and that the prints of horses’ hoofs were plainly visible on the turf.

“Did your father go, too?” I asked. But the child did not seem to understand me.

“Wake her up!” she sobbed. “Wake her up, quick! I don’t want to stay here any longer.”

“What is your name? Where would you like me to take you?” I continued.

But she only sobbed wildly, without replying. I was still kneeling beside her, uncertain what to say or do,

when she hastily sprang to her feet, and throwing her arms around my neck, cried imploringly, —

“Oh, take me away! take me away from here! Let us go now.”

The caress brought the tears to my eyes; and without stopping to reflect any longer, I gave her a warm embrace, and said resolutely, —

“Come, then, you shall be my little sister, and Fédor Illitch shall be your father.”

“And Mamouchka?” she asked, as I arose and took her by the hand.

“We will come back for her. She is sleeping now.”

“Wake her up, wake her up, you nice boy,” she pleaded.

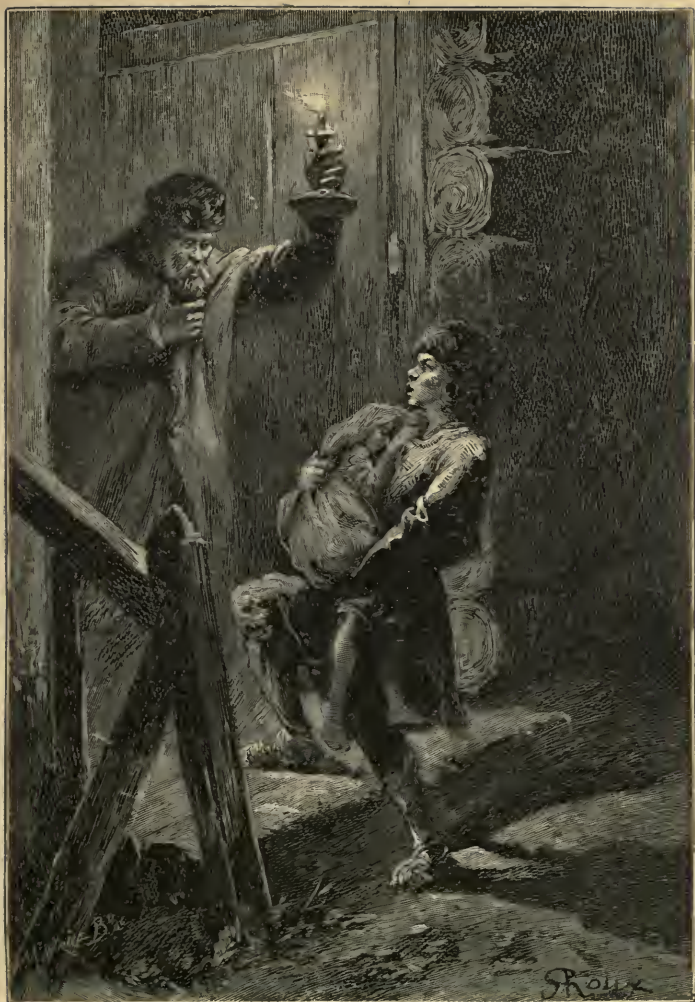
“Yes, yes; but come with me now, and I promise you we will return for her by and by.”

Taking off my coat, I laid it reverently over the face of the dead, fastening it down securely at the edges with some large stones; then with feverish haste I piled some boughs over her to form a sort of shelter; and sure now that the remains would be safe until we could give them Christian burial, I again took the child by the hand, saying firmly, —

“You must come with me now. It is getting late. We will return for your mother presently.”

The poor little thing followed me submissively, though not without casting many a tearful glance behind her. Poor child, my heart bled for her! I loved my own father so much that I could truly sympathize with the desolate little creature whose cold and trembling hand lay so confidingly in mine. Soon she paused, too exhausted with hunger and fatigue to take another step. Without an instant's hesitation, I took her up in my arms; she





“MY FATHER APPEARED UPON THE THRESHOLD, LAMP IN HAND.”





slipped hers around my neck, and in another minute she was sound asleep.

Oh, how interminable the road seemed to me! One by one the stars appeared in the firmament above me, as I staggered on with my heavy burden. How little progress I seemed to make! Again and again I paused, completely out of breath, and covered with perspiration; but the child slept quietly on.

It was long after midnight when I emerged from the forest, and saw the broad highway before me, and a light shining in the window of the little cottage where my father was doubtless anxiously awaiting my return.

Summoning up all my strength, I hastened through the village almost on a run, and at last reached our house. Before I had time to rap, the door was hastily thrown open, and my father appeared upon the threshold, lamp in hand.

“Is it you, Dmitri?” he asked anxiously.

“Yes, Father.”

“Heaven be praised! Come in; you have frightened me half to death, child. Where have you been?”

I had dropped down exhausted upon a bench that stood against the wall near the door, and it was not until my father had placed the lamp on the table and again turned to me, that he noticed the child in my arms.

“What have you there?” he cried in great astonishment.

“I found her in the woods; her mother is dead, so I brought her home with me,” I faltered, for all my strength seemed to have suddenly deserted me.

My father perceived this fact, and without asking me any further questions, he hastily poured out a large tumbler of tea, and added a few drops of rum to it.

“Drink this first, and tell me all about it afterwards,” he said kindly.

I obeyed; and after draining the glass at a single draught I was myself again.

Meanwhile, my father had taken the little girl from me, and without waking her, had deposited her gently in a big armchair near the stove. I followed him; and as I gave him a brief account of my adventure, he listened gravely, gazing thoughtfully all the while at the face and garments of the little waif. Her clothing was entirely different in style and cut from any we had ever seen, and the child herself was of an essentially foreign type.

“It is more than likely that the mother, being too weak to go any farther, was deserted by one of those bands of roving Cossacks that frequent the banks of the Don,” remarked my father, when I had finished my story. “It is fortunate indeed, Mitia, that you chanced to go to the lake to-day; as but for you the child would doubtless have shared the fate of her unfortunate mother.”

“You will keep her, Father, will you not?” I pleaded.

He bowed his head gravely, in token of assent.

“I shall have two children now, instead of one,” he remarked. “Did she tell you her name?”

“She did n’t even seem to understand what I meant when I asked her.”

“Then we will call her *Sacha*,<sup>1</sup> after your dear mother,” said my father, in a voice that trembled with emotion.

And from that day I had a sister.

<sup>1</sup> A contraction of *Alexandra*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SACHA.

EARLY the next morning, my father started off in his *télégue* in company with the pope and the village grave-digger. I begged hard to accompany them; but he convinced me that it would be better for me to remain at home, in order that I might be at hand to quiet the little girl's fears when she woke and found herself in a strange place without her mother.

Good Agathon Illarionovitch objected to going at first, on the plea that nobody knew what kind of people these strangers were. Very possibly, judging from the child's appearance, they might be gypsies or Tartars or some other kind of heathen.

He could not reconcile it with his own conscience to bury the poor woman among his parishioners; and though he finally consented to honor her interment with a prayer, it was only on condition that she should be buried alone on the border of the Haunted Lake, and that my father would allow him to baptize the little girl on his return.

This was done, and the little waif received the names of Alexandra Féderovna.

In fact, it was the touch of the baptismal water upon her forehead that awakened her from her long sleep. She started violently and cast a terrified glance around her. My father was holding her in his arms; Agathon, stand-

ing before the sacred images, with eyes devoutly raised to heaven, had just placed his hands upon her head, and I was kneeling beside him holding the cup of holy water.

Though evidently much frightened, the child did not move, but allowed the rite to be completed in silence. When it was over, my father set her gently on the floor, and after kissing her on the forehead, left the house with the pope.

The little girl rushed to me.

“Where is my mamma?” she whispered, seizing my hand. “Come and find her.”

“Your mamma is not here, my little dear. She is in heaven.”

“Where? I want to see her, — quick!”

“You can’t see her now, my poor little dove. You are going to live with us now, and I will be your brother.”

The child pushed me violently away and burst into a fit of sobbing. Then rushing wildly to the door, she tried to open it with her little hands, and failing in this, threw herself upon the floor, sobbing even more violently than before. I was miserable. I did not know how to console her in her terrible affliction; but seating myself on the floor beside her, I put my arm tenderly around her, and whispered, —

“Don’t drive me away, little sister. I will love you so much that you won’t be unhappy, especially when you find out how kind my father is. We won’t forget your mamma; we’ll talk of her every day, and —”

“Oh, Mamma, Mamma!” repeated the child, with a heart-rending sob; but she no longer repulsed me, and soon began to weep more quietly, with her head resting upon my shoulder.



Her tears ceasing at last, I laid her on the lounge and ran to the baker's, where I bought a warm roll, which I placed before her, together with a large bowl of milk. Accustomed to eat with the appetite of a young wolf myself, I was greatly surprised and disconcerted to see how little my *protégée* seemed to appreciate the fine breakfast I had prepared for her. She ate but little more than a bird, and scarcely touched her lips to the bowl of creamy milk, though she could have partaken of no other nourishment for a long time.

After she finished eating, I thought I would try to comb the long hair which hung in such disorder about her pretty face; but this attempt proved a failure. She began to cry, and I was standing before her, comb in hand, greatly perplexed, when my father entered.

He laughed heartily on seeing us.

"You have n't had experience enough for that, I fear, my boy," he said kindly, "so I've brought Tatiana to look after my little daughter. Come in, Tatiana, don't be afraid."

A buxom, rosy-cheeked girl, the niece of the village elder, was standing on the threshold, giggling and hiding her face in her sleeve.

"Dress her from head to foot as I asked you, Tatiana," continued my father; "and I'll attend you all for nothing as long as you live."

"You would do that anyway, Fédor Illitch," replied the girl, laughing.

And it was really so. My father seldom received a *grivenik*,<sup>1</sup> much less a *rouble*,<sup>2</sup> from his patients. They paid

<sup>1</sup> A Russian coin equivalent to about twelve and one-half cents in United States currency.

<sup>2</sup> A Russian coin equivalent to about seventy-five cents in United States currency.

him in affection, in respect, in household provisions, and in hay; but he never complained, and attended the poorest peasant in Sitovka as faithfully as he would a baroness.

Little Sacha tried to hide herself behind me, but Tatiana picked her up and carried her home. Half an hour afterwards she brought her back to us, transformed. The child's luxuriant brown hair had been neatly combed and arranged in two heavy braids, and she wore a pretty scarlet skirt and a white chemisette, tucked and embroidered at the throat and wrists. Tatiana had not even neglected to put around her neck the necklace of amber beads worn by all Russian girls.

I clapped my hands with delight; my father, too, seemed well pleased.

"See what I found around the little girl's neck, Fédor Illitch," said Tatiana, holding up a round medal, or amulet, made of platinum. Upon it was inscribed in gold the letters A. I. B.

"Perhaps this will assist us in discovering the child's relatives some day," remarked my father, after examining it long and carefully. "We must take good care of it. It is the only clew we have. I thank you for the trouble you have taken, Tatiana. You're a good girl. Now will you oblige me by continuing to take charge of her until she is old enough to take care of herself? All the village children are fond of you, and it is because you love them and are kind to them; so I feel sure that I shall not annoy you by asking this favor."

"I'll take charge of her very willingly, Fédor Illitch. I was almost afraid of her at first, she looked so wild and implike; but she looks very different now she's been washed and dressed, and I think I shall soon get

really fond of her. I believe you will love me, too, eh, Sacha?"

But Sacha's heart was not so easily won. As soon as she returned, she again hid herself behind me, keeping a tight hold on my hand. Tatiana smiled good naturedly, however, and departed, promising to return on the morrow.

From that day, Sacha and I were inseparable. She remained rather shy and reserved toward every one except my father; but she accepted me without reserve as a brother, and in six months I found it hard to believe that I was not so in reality. She was very bright and intelligent. It was never necessary to repeat anything to her twice; she seemed to comprehend an explanation instantly. In a few weeks, she spoke Russian with ease, and French seemed equally easy to her; but all her childish memories seemed to be enshrouded in mystery and gloom. She had an indistinct recollection of a long and fatiguing journey, wild horses, and savage looking men; but these memories seemed to excite and terrify her so much that my father forbade me to make the slightest allusion to them, and gradually all remembrance of this mysterious past faded from her mind.

My little sister soon learned to dress herself without assistance, and after watching my awkward attempts at housework for some time, she relieved me of my duties and of my broom, to my infinite delight.

Sacha seemed even less inclined to associate with the village children than I was. The strange way in which I happened to find her created quite a sensation at first; but the Russian peasant is a stolid creature who takes very little interest in his neighbors' affairs, and the affair was

soon forgotten. True, a schoolboy called her "that gypsy brat" one day; but I turned on him then and there, and gave him such a thrashing that he never repeated the offence, at least in my hearing.

I must not forget that Porphyre also espoused Sacha's cause very warmly, and came out of the fight with a fine black eye. His valor softened my heart a little, and convinced me that there might be some good in the fellow after all. Sacha, however, was not in the least touched by his devotion, but made open fun of his awkwardness and stupidity upon all occasions, and I must admit that I was only too willing to second her.

Not that Sacha and I were always on the best of terms, however. Far from it. We had quarrels in plenty. At first her sorrow and loneliness made me her willing slave, and I submitted to her slightest caprice without a murmur; but as I grew older, I became a terrible tease. Sacha was jealous and very sensitive, and it did not take me long to discover the fact. The merest trifle — an affectionate word from my father to me, or from me to my father, or a caress bestowed upon Vodka — often sufficed to excite her wrath and jealousy. After an incident of this kind, she usually fled to the woods, and sometimes refused to speak to me for days afterwards. Her subsequent penitence was equally profound. I possessed a much more equable temperament, and thought little Sacha's paroxysms of grief and anger the strangest and most amusing thing in the world; so, though I really loved her devotedly, I often made her very unhappy.

My father never paid any attention to our quarrels, while Sacha was generous to a fault, and nothing could have induced her to complain of me. I well remember the

jealousy my dog, Snap, aroused in the heart of my little sister. He was given to me two or three years after Sacha's arrival in our midst by a nobleman who happened to be in our village. This baron was an impecunious \*cousin of Mme. Lebanoff, who had taken him into her household,—a very common thing in Russia. His dog, while running across a field near our house, fell into a trap that had been set for a wolf, and his leg was badly injured. He suffered terribly,—so terribly indeed, that his owner was on the point of shooting him to put him out of his misery.

Hearing the noise, Sacha and I hastened to the spot.

The poor dog was lying on the ground, moaning and licking his injured paw, and gazing up beseechingly at his master, a fine looking, elderly gentleman, who seemed deeply distressed to see his faithful hound in such a sorry condition.

“What is to be done, Stepan?” he asked, turning to the servant in attendance.

“It's only a dog,” the man replied, shrugging his shoulders.

“Yes, but a very valuable dog, you idiot! One of the finest dogs in the country,—a dog that the princess imported from France. How very annoying! I would much rather it was you, Stepan. But don't stand there like a gaping idiot. What is to be done? Can't you suggest something?”

“It is for you to say, of course, Arcadion Sémonovitch.”

“Would you kill him to put him out of his misery, if you were in my place?”

“There would be one dog less in the world, that is all.”

“Poor Snap,” murmured the gentleman, patting the dog on the head. “I cannot leave you here, and I can't



take you with me, as we start for Paris to-morrow; so I shall have to kill you. It seems to me that I shall be committing a murder, though," he added, averting his face, which was pale with emotion.

The dog, who had been watching his master's every movement with evident anxiety, pricked up his ears as the gentleman slowly raised his gun.

I ran to him.

"Don't kill the dog, Baron!" I cried. "Give him to me instead."

"What will you do with him? Don't you see that he is badly hurt? I fear his back is broken."

"That makes no difference. Don't kill him. I'll take good care of him, and if he can be cured, I'll cure him."

"But *you* can't cure him."

"Let me try, please let me try! It will spare you the pain of killing him."

"But will you know what to do for him if I leave him?"

"My father is a doctor, and he will tell me what to do to cure the dog."

"Very well, then, I'll give him to you. Poor Snap! to think that you will end your days in a Sitovka hovel! It is hard. But you're not a bad-looking boy, after all," he added, turning to me. "Take good care of him. Here's a rouble for you."

He threw a piece of money at me as he spoke.

Crimson with anger, I picked it up and tried to return it to him.

"I did not ask for pay, Arcadion Sémonovitch," I said haughtily.

“Indeed! what fine gentleman is this? He has quite a lordly air!” he exclaimed in French. “Keep the money, I don’t want it,” he added in Russian.

“Nor do I!” I retorted, also in French, which seemed to surprise him very much. “Here, take it!” I cried, turning angrily to Stepan, and throwing it straight in his face.

Stepan shrugged his shoulders and pocketed the coin. The baron picked up his gun, bestowed a last caress on his dog, and walked away without honoring me with another glance. The faithful animal attempted to get up and follow his master, but sank down again with a long, lugubrious howl.

Sacha, who had not spoken up to that time, clutched me wildly by the arm, and exclaimed, —

“I’m afraid, Mitia! Let us go, I’m afraid of him!”

“Nonsense!” I retorted angrily. “The dog only shows his sense by crying for his master. There, there,” I added, stroking his handsome head; “don’t grieve, my good fellow; I’ll take care of you and cure you, and you’ll soon get fond of me. Sacha, too, will love you.”

“No, I love you; I don’t love the dog.”

“But I love you and the dog, too. See how handsome he is! What a broad chest he has, and what powerful paws, and such beautiful eyes! What a grand fellow you are! Let me look at your paw. Ah, I’ve hurt you, but it’s all for your good, as you will see by and by. Sacha, give me your handkerchief.”

“No.”

“Selfish thing,” I said coldly, pushing away the hand she tried to slip into mine; and in a few minutes I had improvised a splint out of some moss, two pieces of

board, and a bandage, made by tearing up one of my shirt sleeves.

The poor animal did not move ; but when I had finished, he began to lick my hands, and the expression of his eyes was almost human.

“We must carry him home, now. Will you help me, Sacha?”

But as she pouted and still refused to answer, I lifted the dog and carried him to our little stable without any assistance from her. Sacha followed me in silence, with compressed lips and knitted brows. She was evidently jealous of the dog.

I laid the animal on a pile of straw, and noticing that his nose was hot and dry, a sure sign of fever, I placed before him a big earthen pan of water, which he emptied almost at a single draught. As soon as my father returned, I showed him my patient. He complimented me on the skilful manner in which I had dressed the injured leg, and said there was nothing for him to do but administer some cooling medicine to the poor beast.

I held his mouth open while my father poured down the mixture ; and in his frantic efforts to escape, poor Snap splashed nearly half of the medicine on my nose and lips. Ugh, how bitter it was ! But this ordeal over, the dog stretched himself out on the straw with a long sigh of relief, laid his nose between his paws, and fell into a deep sleep.

“He ’ll get over it,” remarked my father, rising from his knees ; “and you ’ll have a nice playfellow, Mitia.”

“Yes ; but Sacha does n’t like him.”

“Oh, that will be all right by and by. You have n’t had any difficulty with her about the dog, I hope,” continued my father. “Sacha is n’t a big strong boy like you. A



“I PLACED BEFORE HIM A BIG EARTHEN PAN OF WATER.”





person might tease you and hustle you about, as much as he pleased, and you would be all the better for it. You must spare the weak, Mitia; never forget that."

I hung my head, and started off in search of Sacha. I found her sitting in the corner by the stove, gloomy and silent.

"Why are you angry with me?" I asked.

She made no reply.

"You certainly would not have had me leave that poor dog to die," I continued impatiently.

"You care more for him than you do for me."

"Oh!"

"Go back to your dog, go!" she cried passionately. "Why did you bring me here if you must go and take in the first dog you find on the roadside in the same way. Go away, go away, I tell you! You're not my brother any longer."

"Why, Sacha!"

She burst into a violent fit of sobbing. I tried to console her, and to make her understand that I could love her and love the dog, too; but in vain.

All this grieved me the more because I had already taken a great liking to poor Snap; and feeling myself responsible for his recovery, I devoted most of my time to him. If Sacha had not taken such a dislike to him, we might have teased and spoiled him together, and as he was as affectionate as he was handsome, we should have been a jolly trio of friends; but she pretended to consider him a very dangerous animal, and to be very much afraid that he would bite her. I say pretended, for it seemed to me impossible that she should really be afraid of such a gentle and affectionate dog.

He was soon completely cured, and able to gambol about as before, for he was a young dog. I was very proud of his beauty and courage, and we became more and more fond of each other every day.

Sacha and I were on much less friendly terms, however. We quarrelled about the most trivial matters; and I was becoming more and more inclined to tease, and she was becoming more and more sensitive, when I played a joke on her which came so near being fatal in its consequences that it proved a bitter lesson to me, and so effectually cured me of this foolish and disagreeable habit that my dear little sister never had any further cause to complain of her adopted brother.

## CHAPTER V.

### A THRILLING ADVENTURE WITH A WOLF.

ONE day my father brought Sacha a package, which he advised her to open very carefully. He had just returned from the town of V——, about sixty miles away, whither he had been summoned for consultation.

Greatly excited, my little sister opened the box and took from it a doll, the like of which she had never seen before. It must have come from Paris, judging from its costume; a gown of blue velvet, *en traine*, a plumed hat, a dainty fan suspended from the waist, and a profusion of golden hair dressed in the most elaborate manner.

Sacha gazed at it for a moment in silent ecstasy; then she uttered a cry of delight, and began to lavish kisses and all sorts of endearing names upon her treasure. Next came my father's turn and mine; but Snap having put out his nose to smell the new comer, Sacha pressed her child to her heart with an essentially maternal gesture. I had never seen her so delighted; she talked and talked, her eyes sparkled; she was really beside herself with joy.

How enraptured she was when she found that the doll's garments could be taken off and put on again, — a great advantage, it seems, and one that is quite rare with these young ladies. I speak only with reference to the dolls we had seen in Sitovka, and those sold at our annual fair, —

unwieldy creatures whose gaudy clothing was either nailed or glued upon their bodies; while this elegant damsel wore not only a dress and a dainty white skirt and fine underclothing, but silk stockings, and lovely little shoes that filled Sacha's heart with rapturous delight. The doll was dressed and undressed twenty times that evening; Sacha had her sit beside her at table, and she went to bed that night with her treasure pressed to her heart.

From that day, Mademoiselle, as we called her, was seldom out of her mother's arms. She even shared the lessons which my father gave Sacha, and by which she appeared to profit in a truly marvellous manner, — at least so it seemed to me. That she studied cheerfully herself seemed strange enough; but when I saw her making tiny blank-books for her doll, in which she recopied all her exercises in the finest possible hand, I never ceased to marvel. To make all this seem more real, Sacha always wrote her exercises and those of Mademoiselle a little differently; and my father, entering into the spirit of the little comedy, examined both with equal care, and it was sometimes Sacha and sometimes Mademoiselle who stood at the head of the class.

In spite of my twelve years and my pretensions to being a big boy, I seldom disdained to join in the play of Sacha and Mademoiselle, though the elaborate costume of the latter furnished me with food for continual ridicule and more or less ill-tempered jibes; but when they gave a ball, I never failed to appear at the appointed hour to take part in the festivities. True, I confined myself principally to devouring the refreshments, but Sacha and Mademoiselle were generally too much engrossed in dancing to pay any attention to that. After the stock of eatables was ex-

hausted, I would take Snap by his forelegs and compel him to dance with me; and when we became weary of that sport, I would take down my *balalaïka*,<sup>1</sup> and we would sing our sweet but melancholy Russian folk-songs. Sacha's voice was as clear as that of a skylark, and my father seemed to listen with pleasure, and never complained of the noise we made on these festive occasions. Snap, lying at his feet, and still panting from his enforced exercise, surveyed us all with a kindly smile,—for no Christian ever had a more frank and benignant smile; and I do not believe that the most magnificent ball in St. Petersburg ever afforded its guests as much pleasure as ours.

How the diabolical idea of marring this happiness originated, I know not; but it had lasted several months, and was doubtless beginning to pall upon me.

At all events, the following is a truthful account of the affair.

Tatiana Ipronovna came for Sacha in hot haste one day. She was to be married soon, and as Sacha was to serve as her attendant, it was necessary that some dress or piece of finery should be tried on; and Sacha departed so hurriedly that she forgot Mademoiselle, and left her on the table, where she was presumably engaged in doing her exercises.

My father was away, and I was consequently left alone with the doll.

I solemnly declare that at first I merely intended to look at her. I picked her up, made a few faces at her, then turned her round and round in my hands, vaguely wondering how Sacha could take such intense delight in fondling this bit of kid and china. Suddenly an idea, inspired, I am sure, by the Evil One himself, flitted through

<sup>1</sup> A musical instrument resembling a guitar, but with only three strings.



my brain. What would Sacha say if, on her return, she saw in place of her gorgeously arrayed Mademoiselle a *youroudivyi*<sup>1</sup> as fantastically dressed and hideous in appearance as one we had seen pass through our village a short time before?

It would certainly seem very funny to her. Animated by this brilliant idea, and without giving a thought to the bitter grief I was about to inflict upon my poor little sister, I began my work of destruction.

I took the scissors: Snip! snap! and the doll was shorn of her golden tresses. This done, I dexterously divested her of her fine apparel, and soon had poor Mademoiselle attired in a ragged smock made from the torn sleeve of an old overcoat. Out of her beautiful velvet gown I made a wallet, or bag, which I took the trouble to improve by rubbing on the stove, and which I afterwards suspended from the doll's shoulder by a string. I even slipped in a piece of rye bread to make the resemblance complete. Then, seizing the gluepot, and taking a handful of the shorn tresses which were lying on the table, I glued them on the doll's rosy cheeks for a beard, after which I ingeniously cut the tips of the pretty shoes so the toes would protrude; and then placing my *chef d'œuvre* in a conspicuous position, I awaited the result of my labors.

If I live a hundred years, I shall never forget Sacha's look when she re-entered the room, and dancing up to the table, beheld her doll. She turned pale, her lips quivered, her eyes seemed to start from their sockets; she recoiled in horror, and in that instant, as if a veil had been suddenly torn from my eyes, I realized the atrociousness of my crime! I saw how cruel I had been, and how deeply I

<sup>1</sup> A mountebank, or peddler.

had injured the child whom I nevertheless sincerely loved ! It was the first time I had ever felt the sting of remorse, and though the cause was comparatively frivolous, my compunctions of conscience were none the less bitter. My poor little Sacha ! What would I not have given if that fatal idea had never occurred to me !

Neither of us uttered a word. I stood breathlessly watching the child, who had taken the victim in her two hands, and was gazing at it with a bewildered air. I would greatly have preferred that she had flown at me like a young tigress. At last I could endure the silence no longer.

“Sacha,” I faltered in a smothered voice, “I did n’t mean to grieve you. See, it is a *youroudivyi*.”

On hearing my voice, she started violently, and turning, gave me a look that cut me to the heart. I took a step toward her ; but she repelled me with a passionate gesture, and in a trembling voice that I scarcely recognized, exclaimed, —

“So it was you ! you ! Oh, Mitia, how could you do it ? Never speak to me again, — never ! Oh, it was vile, cowardly ! ”

She paused, overcome with emotion. As for me, there was such a big lump in my throat that I could not utter a word. I would gladly have given everything I possessed in the world if I had not done the deed. In a moment she dropped the mutilated body of her doll on the floor, and turned toward the door.

“Where are you going ? ” I cried in anguish. “It is terribly cold, and the ground is covered with snow.”

“Let me alone,” she retorted savagely. “I forbid you to follow me.”

And she rushed out, leaving me rooted to the spot. I heard the sound of her rapid footsteps die away in the distance. Where was she going? I dared not follow her. The sound of her departing footsteps upon the frozen ground, the disfigured doll lying on the floor, the terrible grief I had seen depicted on Sacha's poor little face, — all combined to overpower me, and sinking into a chair, I put my head on the table and burst into tears.

“Fool, coward, wretch that I am!” I groaned, beating my head with my clenched fists. “Can it be I have done such a thing! I, and to that poor child! Oh, Sacha, Sacha, if I could only give you back your doll!”

I do not know how long I sat there; but the opening of the door at last aroused me from my sorrowful revery. I looked up quickly, hoping to see Sacha enter, but it was Porphyre.

He seated himself by the stove, and I sullenly buried my face in my arm again to shut out the sight of him. After a moment, I heard a sort of guffaw. He had just perceived the *youroudivyi*, and he was laughing at it.

His mirth exasperated me. It made me realize even more thoroughly the enormity of my act; and adding injustice to my other crimes, I turned, and without a word of warning, gave him a violent box on the ear.

“That will teach you to laugh, you idiot!” I roared wrathfully. “Well, are n't you going to hit me back? What are your fists for?”

“But I'm not mad,” he replied, staring at me in such artless surprise that I could not help laughing in spite of my grief.

“You are the biggest simpleton I ever saw!” I exclaimed, giving him another blow, — a friendly one this

time on the shoulder. "What did you come for?" I added, without even caring to hear his response, however.

"I came to tell you that the wolf has been seen again," Porphyre answered stolidly, evidently not making the slightest effort to fathom the cause of my agitation.

"The wolf?" I repeated absently.

"Yes; you know. His tracks were seen near the village awhile ago, you remember. Well, the cold has driven him out of the woods, and he was seen again this morning. They say he's enormous."

I sprang to my feet. The wolf was prowling around the village, and Sacha — where was she? What if the poor child had fled to the woods to conceal her grief, as she had done more than once when I was tormenting her. My head swam, and a thousand horrible visions flitted before my eyes.

I seized the astonished Porphyre by the throat, and wild with terror and anxiety, I shook him violently.

"Where is she?" I cried. "Where is she, I say?"

"Eh! what? You're strangling me, Dmitri."

"Sacha, Sacha!" I cried, relaxing my hold so suddenly that Porphyre fell to the floor, overturning bench and table in his fall. "Where is she? Where shall I look for her? Here, Snap, here!" I shouted, throwing him a little handkerchief Sacha was in the habit of wearing around her neck. "Find her, find her, my good dog! Find Sacha."

I opened the door; he sprang out, and in another second I heard the peculiar bark that a hunting dog gives when he finds the scent, and saw him dart off like a streak of lightning toward the forest. My blood curdled in my veins. The wolf was there unquestionably. Could we get there in time?

I caught up a heavy stick and rushed after the dog, who uttered a shrill bark now and then as he flew swiftly on, without turning either to the right or left.

Night was coming on; the snow-covered fields stretched before us, silent and deserted. No human being was visible. All the houses were closed; but as I ran by, I pounded on several windows with my stick and shouted, "Help, help, the wolf!" then hastened on without pausing to see if I had been heard.

The dog ran swiftly on and on. Good heavens! how far it was! Yes, I knew now. When anything troubled her, she was wont to flee to the heart of the forest, like a wounded doe; but never in winter until now. The cold alone was enough to kill her, she was so frail and delicate.

Frantic with terror, I rushed on. Big tears, that the cutting wind froze on my cheeks, streamed from my eyes.

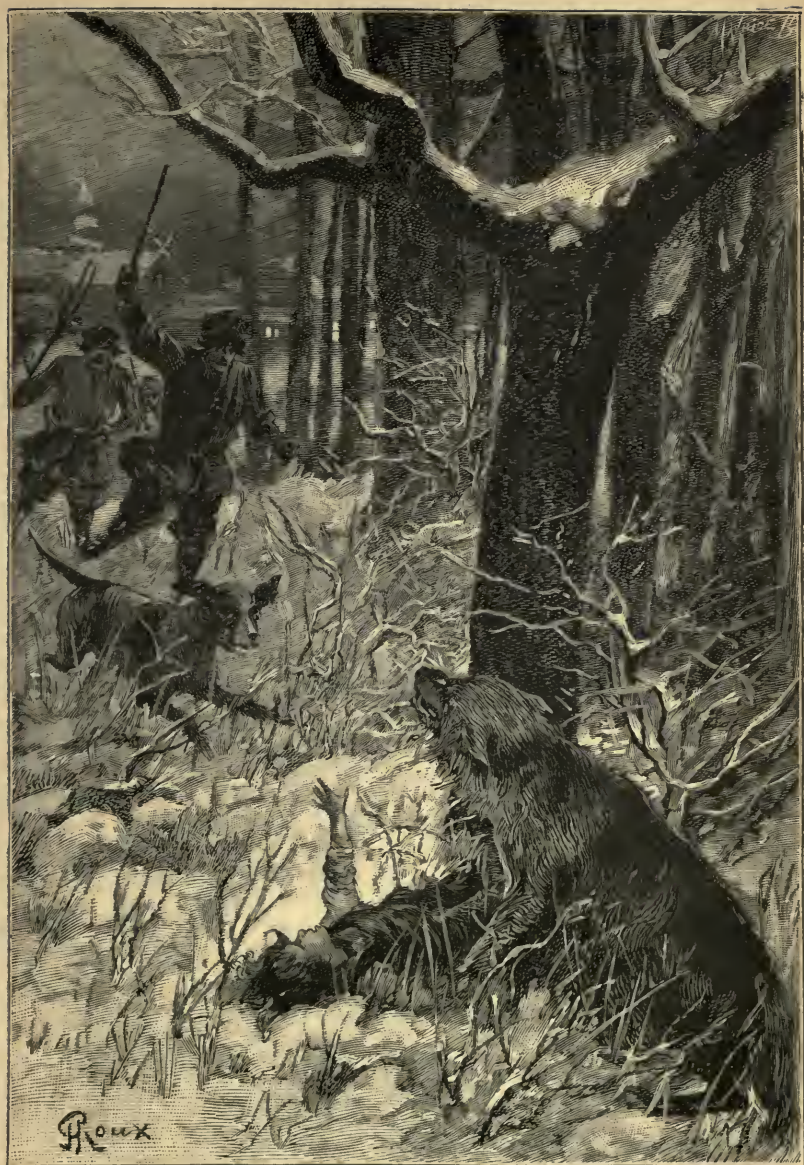
Suddenly Snap seemed to redouble his speed. As he did so, he uttered a still more piercing bark; and above it I heard a despairing cry of "Help, Mitia, help!"

Oh, what a cry of anguish I uttered in reply! "Here I am, Sacha, here I am! Where are you?" I shouted wildly, despairingly.

There was a sharp turn in the road just before me. When I reached it, a terrible sight met my gaze. Sacha was lying on the snow at the edge of the forest. Over her, with one paw already on her breast, but with his foaming mouth and bristling mane turned toward me, stood an enormous wolf, his red eyes shining like rubies in the dim light.

Oh, how far off it seemed! Should I get there in time





DMITRI RESCUING SACHA FROM THE WOLF.



to save her? How could I hope to succeed with no weapon but my stick! Just at that instant my foot caught in the root of a tree, and I fell full length upon the ground.

Another piercing shriek rent the air. My head had struck the tree with such violence, that I should have been stunned had not my little sister's cry aroused me from my torpor. I sprang up, but my brave dog was ahead of me. With a savage growl, he had sprung upon his formidable adversary, and planted his sharp teeth firmly in his throat; and the two animals were now rolling over and over each other on the ground in deadly combat.

Quick as thought I ran to Sacha and set her on her feet. She was half dead with fright, but otherwise unhurt. A single glance convinced me of that, though her clothing was badly torn. A second more and all would have been over.

I pressed her passionately to my heart. Oh, the joy of that moment! But we were not out of danger yet. If my brave Snap was worsted in the struggle, what would become of us? I placed myself in front of Sacha to protect her if worst came to worst, and turned my attention to the combatants.

The snow around them was stained with blood, but the conflict was raging with undiminished fury. The wolf seemed likely to come off victorious however; so I rushed forward and dealt him a violent blow on the head with my stick. This partially stunned him at the very instant that the dog with one final effort tore the beast's throat from ear to ear. A torrent of blood spurted in my very face; the wolf uttered a lugubrious howl, and turning a somersault in the air, fell dead upon the snow.

Just then Porphyre, pale with terror, came running up,

followed by several peasants armed with clubs and pitchforks. They assisted me in moving the body of the wolf, which had fallen upon Snap. The poor dog was, to all appearance, lifeless; his snowy coat was stained with blood in twenty places; his eyes were closed, and he had ceased to breathe.

"Snap," I cried despairingly, "you're not dead! you can't be dead! Wake up! It is I, your master."

But he remained motionless; and falling on my knees beside him, I wept as if my heart would break. I could not believe that he was dead.

"Come," said Porphyre, "come, brother. We must go home. It is getting late."

"Do you suppose I am going to leave him here for the wolves to eat?"

"We will take him with us."

"But we shall have to carry Sacha."

"No, no, I will walk," sobbed Sacha. "Yes, let us take him home with us, Mitia. Poor dog, he was a thousand times better than I! To think that he should give his life for me when I have always treated him so unkindly, and given him nothing but harsh words. You did right to love him, Dmitri. How can you ever forgive me for being the cause of his death?"

"Oh, Sacha, how can you ever forgive me for what I did to-day? It is all my fault! But for me, you would not have run away, and poor Snap would still be alive. I did not intend to grieve you, I assure you. I only did it for fun."

Sacha bowed her head to conceal her tears.

"Come, Mitia, let us pick him up," interposed Porphyre, suddenly. "I will help you carry him."



But as we lifted the brave dog, he gave a faint moan. In his astonishment, Porphyre let the poor beast fall to the ground with such violence that Snap opened his languid eyes and tried to show his teeth. In our excessive joy, we committed all sorts of absurdities. I began to dance and sing, throwing my cap into the air and embracing Sacha, Porphyre, and the dog indiscriminately.

While the peasants were engaged in measuring the wolf, which was unusually large, — fully six feet in length, if I remember rightly, — I heard the sound of approaching carriage-wheels. It proved to be my father returning home as fast as Vodka could bring him. I explained the situation of affairs to him. Sacha and Snap were placed in the vehicle, and my father drove swiftly off, leaving all the rest of us to follow.

The peasants carried the body of the wolf to the village, and the skin was tanned and subsequently used as a rug by my father. It must still be in our house in Sitovka. My dear old home, shall I ever see it again?

Sacha soon recovered from her fright. As for poor Snap, it took skilful doctoring and careful nursing to save him, for his wounds were numerous and severe; but my father devoted himself heart and soul to the work, and Sacha would have died rather than abandon her post by the invalid. It was really to her that he owed his recovery, and he repaid her devotion with the true affection of an honest nature.

My father did not scold me when I confessed my fault, but contented himself with saying, in an earnest tone that went straight to my heart, —

“I shall not reproach you, my boy, for you have seen the almost fatal consequences of your joke. I am sure



you understand that the perpetration of such tricks are no sign of courage or wit, especially when the victim is a weaker person than yourself."

"Yes, Father, yes, I will never be guilty of such a thing again. Sacha has forgiven me. It is the last time I will ever tease her, I swear it!"

And it was the last. The lesson had been a terrible one, but I profited by it.

One day, after Snap had entirely recovered from his wounds, I brought Sacha a little coffin, which I had constructed with all the care and skill of which I was capable. In it we placed the remains of poor Mademoiselle, wrapped in a handkerchief, and covered with flowers. Sacha shed a few tears, but bravely concealed her grief so as not to pain me. I officiated as pope at the funeral services, and Snap followed the coffin with a long black ribbon tied to his tail. We buried her at the foot of the garden. Peace to her ashes!

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SITOVKA FAIR.

THE great event of the year to us was the Sitovka Fair. I still remember our feverish waiting just before the great festival, when the gypsies began to encamp on the steppe, and the various side-shows established themselves in the public square. This fair attracted a great many people to our village. Our towns are so far apart that a journey of a hundred and fifty versts<sup>1</sup> is considered a mere trifle when one's pleasure or profit is involved; besides, coming as this fair did, in the spring of the year, the weather was no drawback. The long winter was over, and I do not remember a single fair when the weather was not superb.

In foreign books I have always seen Russia depicted as a gloomy country, shrouded in eternal snow; but this is a great mistake. Our springs are usually delightful, and that which immediately followed my thirteenth birthday was unusually fine.

I rose before the sun on the opening day of the fair, and took a run through the fields in order to make the most of the beautiful morning, and enjoy, in anticipation, the pleasures in store for me.

The larks were singing their sweetest songs; the crows were chattering gayly in the tree-tops, and the azure sky

<sup>1</sup> A verst is 3,501 feet.

was flecked by only a few light, fleecy clouds. It was happiness enough to be living on such a morning as this. It was vacation, so I could be as idle as I chose. There was no recollection of lessons unlearned to mar my enjoyment, as was too often the case, even on the days when I did not honor the schoolhouse with my presence.

I was becoming a little more studious as I grew older however, and Master Lebewohl began to cherish some hope of seeing me become less of a dunce; it was thus that he encouraged me to climb the rugged hill of learning.

When I returned from my walk, vehicles of every description were pouring into the village, — *droschkés, télègues*, covered wagons, and chaises, — some dilapidated affairs, others well kept and shining, but all crowded with people from the surrounding country, some clad in fine apparel, others in sheepskin.

I found Sacha waiting for me on our doorstep; and seating myself beside her, I began to talk over our plans for the day. Porphyre was sure to join us shortly.

It is needless to say that all three of us were enthusiastic admirers of all the side-shows. Fat women, educated monkeys, menageries, panoramas, and wax figures all possessed a wonderful charm for us; but what we loved best of all was the circus. We equalled the ancient Romans in our profound appreciation of this species of diversion. If a circus came to Sitovka we soon knew each rider by name, and his every word and gesture had a wonderful charm for us. What would we not have given to attend every performance! — an impossibility of course, on account of the very limited state of our finances; but my father managed to send us occasionally, and our recollec-

tions of it served to enliven our sports all the rest of the year.

We imitated the bareback riders, Sacha representing the leading lady being escorted to her fiery steed — the trunk of an old tree in the garden — by Porphyre, who also filled the important rôle of clown of the troupe. I assumed the duties of director, and had even made several attempts to stand erect upon Vodka's back; but this proceeding proved so distasteful to him that he deposited me on the ground without the slightest ceremony. As for Snap, all my attempts to make him walk on a cask proved utterly futile, and I was obliged to content myself with making him leap high in the air on hearing the name of the czar, and show his teeth ominously at the mention of the odious Turk. If I had been given my choice of a profession at that time, I should certainly have decided upon that of a circus rider, and Porphyre and Sacha would have followed my example.

"Tühr's circus has come!" shouted Porphyre, as far off as he could see us. "He has two elephants and a trained horse that beats the very deuce. I have a rouble to spend. My godfather gave it to me," — his godfather was a rich farmer in the neighborhood, — "and do you know, Dmitri, that they say Tühr is going to hire out some of his saddle horses? They're very different from your poor Vodka, — real trained saddle horses, you know, that will obey the slightest pull of the rein. Upon my word! I've a great mind to take a ride. It will cost a good deal, to be sure, but it will be great fun. You'd like to have one, too, wouldn't you, Sacha? Oh, well, you'll have a chance some day or other, perhaps."

Seeing Porphyre's air of importance, a feeling of

envy at his good fortune took possession of our souls.

"I've only a few *kopecks*," said Sacha, jingling them in her apron pocket, with a little sigh.

"I have two griveniks and three kopecks," I added, "but I want them for something else."

I intended to purchase a doll for Sacha to take Made-moiselle's place.

"Oh, well, you two can have a ride some other time," said Porphyre, condescendingly; and he left us, after promising to meet us a little later in the square, for Father needed us at home that morning.

Our usually quiet cottage was the scene of unwonted commotion on Fair days. Ever since daybreak, people from the surrounding country had been coming in to consult my father, whose medical skill was held in high esteem throughout the district. It was rumored that a wealthy resident of St. Petersburg who had an estate in the neighborhood had publicly declared that one would have to go to the capital in order to find a physician equal to Fédor Illitch Téreنتieff, and I was very proud of the report.

Sacha and I were charged with the duty of ushering the peasants and farmers' wives, one by one, into the front room, and subsequently into the presence of my father, who sat in his big armchair, awaiting them.

Those who did not pay in money — and by far the greater number did not — paid us in provisions, which were a very welcome addition to the contents of our larder. They brought salt meat, honey, butter, cheese, home-made wines, and dried mushrooms, — which would have gladdened the heart of our thrifty little housekeeper, if she had not known that they would disappear almost before she had



arranged them on her pantry shelves; for my father always had some patient who needed this or that delicacy, and he gave it without the slightest hesitation. The farmers' wives often presented themselves with a pair of chickens tied fast together, in their hands. They respectfully deposited their offering on the doorsill before entering the house, and Sacha and I were instructed to set the fowls free. As soon as we had succeeded in untying them, — no easy task by reason of their fluttering and pecking, — we carried them to the little chicken-yard back of the house, where they were fed and watered.

But at last the moment of release came; and with faces shining with soap, and our Sunday clothes on our backs, we hastened toward the Fair grounds. The noise and uproar could be distinctly heard even as far off as our house. It was a confused medley of neighing, bellowing, and snorting, dominated by the shrill cries of geese and the barking of angry dogs, with a constant accompaniment of hand-organs, clashing cymbals, powder crackers, and firearms, all making a hubbub that was sweetest music to our ears.

We soon reached the square where the fair was held.

The enclosure was surrounded by several rows of vehicles. It was here that the horses were sold. They were of every sort and kind, large and small; big, clumsy draught horses, handsome carriage horses, long legged trotters, animals whose days of usefulness were long since over, and young, half broken steeds from the Ukraine, horses from Viatka, with their manes and tails gayly adorned with red ribbons, and harness elaborately decorated with brass mountings. But connoisseurs did not allow themselves to be influenced by this display, and demanded that the horse should be divested of all this

toggery before they decided upon its merits. It was as good as a play to hear the owner swear by all the gods that the animal was a marvel of beauty, a jewel, a steed worthy of Jupiter, and see the would-be purchaser survey the horse with a contemptuous air, poking out his under lip and expectorating every other second.

Congregated around the horses was a motley throng of buyers, spectators, jockeys, and mounted Cossacks, gypsies with circles of bistre around their eyes, peasants in long sheepskin overcoats, and Jews with greasy corkscrew ringlets hanging about their ears, all talking and shouting and gesticulating and pushing and scolding with all their might. It was with no little difficulty that we succeeded in forcing our way through this crowd, and I recollected that my father had bidden me take great care of Sacha.

"Above all, don't let her get too near the horses," he had said to me; "one of them might kick her." So, seeing that the crowd was becoming more and more dense, I elbowed my way to a shed at the end of the square, where the dealers in fancy articles and household utensils had established themselves.

Here there were many more women and children than men, and the counters were covered with gay ribbons and gaudy stuffs, silk handkerchiefs, boots and shoes, and all sorts of feminine adornments. Many of the women wore the national head-dress, the *kakochnik*, which is shaped like a big inverted horseshoe, and which married women alone have the right to wear. Some rosy-cheeked maidens wore the *kika*, which covers the hair entirely, or the tiara-like *paroïnik* adorned with long, floating ribbons; others, who were inclined to abandon ancient customs and our graceful and becoming national costume, contented them-

selves with a silk handkerchief, knotted under the chin. The faces were almost invariably red and shining, for the heat was intense. Suddenly we caught sight of Porphyre, whose face was as luminous as the sun. In obedience to his mother's orders, he was purchasing a hat to take the place of the cap he usually wore, and he seemed utterly unable to decide upon the relative merits of the different styles a garrulous old woman was displaying for his benefit. She had just placed on his head a straight-brimmed white straw hat, with a plaid ribbon around the crown. The hat was much too small for him, but the poor boy was too much afraid of the voluble saleswoman to protest, though his face was as red as a strawberry, and he cast despairing glances around him; so Sacha, unwilling to add to his embarrassment, dragged me away.

But I must say that when Porphyre passed us shortly afterwards with his gray caftan — it was made out of one of his father's, and cut large enough to last him several seasons — fastened around his waist with a blue sash, and his new hat perched rakishly on one side of his head, I thought his appearance quite imposing. He was brandishing a switch that he had cut from a tree near by, and he called out to us in a shrill falsetto voice, — a real Russian voice:

“It's all right! I'm going to take my horseback ride now.”

“Take care you don't lose your hat. It looks to me as if it was too small,” replied Sacha, rather maliciously, little thinking how soon her words would prove true.

A few minutes afterward Porphyre rode proudly by us, mounted on a big white horse with a Roman nose.

“He's as gentle as a dove,” he cried, as he trotted past.

He was proceeding quietly down the road when a beg-

gar, seated by the roadside, suddenly began to grind out the opening measures of the waltz from "Faust" on his little hand-organ.

The white horse pricked up his ears.

"Quiet, old boy," faltered Porphyre, patting the neck of his steed; but lo and behold! the animal stretched out his right leg to its full length and began to whirl round and round like a top. Porphyre tugged fiercely at the reins, and almost pulled his horse over backward; but without avail. It was utterly impossible to check this determined waltzer.

"It's an educated horse!" cried Sacha, laughing; "but I think I'd rather ride the trunk of a tree for all that."

Our friend, now thoroughly frightened, quite unconsciously pressed his father's boots, which unfortunately happened to be provided with spurs, into the horse's flanks, whereupon the animal started off on a swift gallop, and we could hear Porphyre call out tremblingly, —

"Gently! be quiet, now! Whoa! whoa!! whoa!!!"

But all in vain. The white horse had never had a rider of this sort on his back before. He wondered what it meant; he lost his head completely, and flew on and on with the speed of the wind. Porphyre's new hat flew off, and the gray caftan and blue sash streamed wildly out behind him. The dogs, too, started in pursuit, barking with all their might.

Porphyre clasped his arms around the horse's neck; he clung to his mane, to his ears; he shrieked wildly for help. Sacha and I, in company with the dogs, — Snap was at the head of the gang, — started after him. Soon the horse and rider became merely a white speck in the distance.





PORPHYRE AND THE CIRCUS HORSE.





"He'll be killed! the poor fellow will certainly be killed!" cried Sacha.

Just then the horse leaped a hedge. A shallow pond lay on the other side of it, and with a terrible cry, Porphyre fell to the ground.

We ran with all our might, raised him up, and examined him.

"There are no bones broken," said Sacha, joyfully. "What a terrible scare you gave us!"

Porphyre had really received no injuries except a few slight bruises, but the fine gray caftan and handsome blue sash were in a frightful condition. Both were a mass of mud; even Porphyre's round face and thick yellow hair were covered with it.

"Luck is always against me: there is no doubt about it," groaned Porphyre, tragically.

"Don't complain," said Sacha, biting her lips to keep from laughing. "The mud eased your fall. You might have been killed but for that!"

As for me, I was holding my sides; but though I did n't hesitate to laugh at my unfortunate friend, I very willingly assisted Sacha in her efforts to restore the unfortunate cavalier to some semblance of his former self. We brushed him and rubbed him with grass, torn up by handfuls on the roadside; but he could not be made presentable, for to crown his misfortunes he had fallen in the nettles that bordered the pond. It seemed to him that his face was on fire, and he scratched it so furiously that big white blisters appeared upon his cheeks and nose.

"Where is my hat?" he suddenly cried, in a voice that made us tremble, as he raised both hands despairingly to his head.

I ran to look for it, but what a sight it was! Snap had found it and torn it nearly into fragments. It was a tattered, shapeless piece of headgear that even a gypsy would scorn to wear. On seeing me, Snap dropped it, wagged his tail in the most engaging manner, and laid his paw on the hat as if to challenge me to a game. He was in excellent spirits, and seemed to think I ought to share his gayety. I gave him a violent cuff, that appeared to surprise him very much; but he persisted in believing that this was only a part of the fun, and bounded gayly after me.

On regaining possession of his hat, Porphyre uttered a cry of mingled wrath and dismay.

"My new hat!" he groaned. "Oh, what will Mother say? She told me to be so careful of it."

The pope's wife was not likely to view her son's escapade with a lenient eye. She was a strict disciplinarian, and dry bread, solitary confinement, and perhaps the lash, — these were what our companion had every reason to anticipate.

We gazed at each other in speechless consternation for several minutes.

"Listen to me," said Sacha, at last. "Dmitri meant to give me a doll; I have several kopecks, and you, Porphyre, must have some of your rouble left" (there was a gleam of mischief in her eyes as she uttered these words); "well, let us all put our money together, and buy another hat for Porphyre."

I made a slight grimace, and Porphyre protested a little, but Sacha had her way.

We selected another hat, — a larger one this time.

"Now, let's hurry home so you can dry yourself," Sacha remarked, after the purchase was made.

As we were plodding toward our cottage we very narrowly escaped being knocked down by the big white horse, who was galloping back to his stable with quivering nostrils and tail high in the air.

“How fortunate! He might have made his escape to the plains, and then there would have been nothing left for me to do but kill myself!” cried Porphyre, gloomily.

Sacha did her best to remove all traces of the accident by a lavish use of warm water and soap. My father applied a soothing lotion to the poor lad's face, and the day ended very peacefully. In the evening, my father took all three of us to the circus, where we had the satisfaction of seeing the white horse fire a pistol and say his letters as if he had spent his life in a shooting gallery and a school-room.

## CHAPTER VII.

### AN IRREPARABLE LOSS.

I HAVE lingered over the memories of those happy days, for I am nearing the most sorrowful period of my life, and I shrink from speaking of it. Very soon after the events I have just narrated, I lost my father. I have known many bitter trials since, and I have spent many gloomy hours, but no misery that could be compared with my utter desolation and despair when my only friend departed, leaving me alone in this dreary world.

Up to that time, I had been only a thoughtless, light-hearted child; but my father's death effected a complete transformation in me. My childhood ended then and there, and everything assumed a changed aspect in my eyes.

It was autumn, and my fourteenth birthday had just passed, when the condition of my father's health became much more alarming. Day by day he became thinner, and his chest more contracted, while the hectic flush upon his cheeks made the wax-like pallor of the rest of his face all the more noticeable, and his sunken eyes gleamed with extraordinary brilliancy. Still, I suspected nothing; but one day, as I was passing a field bordered by a thick hedge, in which two men were working, my father drove by in his shabby old *télegue*. He spoke to them pleasantly, calling them both by name.



“ God help you, Fédor Illitch !” they responded solemnly.

“ Until time shall be no more,” answered my father.

The laborers stood for a moment watching him.

“ He will soon see the Saviour face to face,” said the elder of them, as he stooped to pick up his spade again.

His companion sighed.

“ He to-day ; you or I to-morrow, perhaps,” he answered, with an air of resignation.

And they resumed their work.

But I stood on the other side of the hedge, as if petrified, so completely was I stunned by this terrible revelation. Was it possible? Could it be that my father was about to leave me, — me, who had never been separated from him a day in my life? I was about to lose him! A little while, and I should see his kind face and hear his loving voice no more! I should be left without a single near relative to help me endure existence in a world which had suddenly become intolerably cold and desolate! And I might live on without my father sixty, even eighty years perhaps, I was so strong and healthy! A feeling of abject terror seized me. It seemed to me that it would be impossible to endure such a calamity. The mere thought of death was unspeakably revolting to me, and in my agony of soul I could scarcely refrain from shrieking aloud; but I could not bear that the peasants should see my grief, so I precipitately fled.

Like Sacha, I rushed to the forest to hide my misery. Poor little Sacha! she, too, would be left without a home or protector. Tears of compassion for her as well as for myself filled my eyes; and throwing myself down upon the moss, I wept as if my heart would break. Oh, my father, my only friend! why should you be taken from us?

For several years I had felt a vague fear of this misfortune, but never once had I looked the reality full in the face. I had resolutely blinded myself to the ravages the disease was making, — no very difficult task, as my father was always so cheerful and courageous, and so loath to admit he was suffering, that he seemed to defy his malady to get the better of him.

But undeceived by the remarks I had just heard, I could not doubt that his days were numbered. A thousand trifling incidents, a thousand petty details, recurred to my mind, — his shorter and more labored breathing; the frequent fits of coughing that tore his lungs and stained his lips with blood; the evident effort it cost him to get in and out of his carriage; his almost insurmountable aversion to our coarse food; and above all, that anxious, sorrowful, far-away look, which I had sometimes noticed in his eyes, and which recurred to me so distinctly now, — the far-away look of one already on the borders of the celestial land.

As I gazed tearfully around me, the thought that this still beautiful earth would soon close over him forever filled me with despair. It seemed to me that the autumnal sunshine, the calm repose of nature, the lovely landscape, were all cruel and unfeeling. What did my grief and despair matter to them? The grass would be no less green, the sky no less blue. At the same time, I remembered how little comfort I had been to this beloved parent. I had not even given him the satisfaction of seeing me profit by the advantages he had given me; I had even allowed the few talents with which I was endowed to remain idle. How mortified such a learned and clever man must have felt to see his son so dull! I longed to run after him and promise to do better in the future; to swear that I would

never again selfishly yield to my love of idleness; but the strange difficulty I had always had in expressing my feelings deterred me. Had I ever overcome my natural reserve sufficiently to give him any verbal assurance of my affection? No; and yet I loved him, — loved him with my whole heart! But this new grief was assuaged in a measure by the conviction that he knew my affection for him, and that we really understood each other.

I recalled a hundred proofs of his tender love for Sacha and me. My father, my beloved father! And he would soon leave me forever! I should have him only a little while longer now! I thought bitterly of the middle-aged people in our village — old people they seemed to me — whose aged parents were still spared to them, while my father was soon to be taken from me. Ignat Stépanovitch, the peasant whose ominous remark I had overheard a few minutes before, had a son thirty years old, and yet his poor old father was still alive, bent almost double, toothless, imbecile, and half blind. Why should this old man, whose life must be a burden to him, live on, and my father be cut down in his prime? Not that I wished any harm to Ignat or old Stépan; but I said to myself that at their age they must certainly feel more resigned to parting with each other than my father and I!

It was not until nightfall that I left the forest and slowly wended my way homeward. I found my father lying back in his big armchair, gasping for breath. It was so dark in the room that I could not see his face; but I crept softly up to him and seated myself on the floor at his feet. A few minutes passed in silence; then, placing his emaciated hand tenderly on my head, he asked gently, —

“What are you thinking about, Mitia?”

But I could not answer him. A big lump rose in my throat; I bowed my head, and in another moment I was sobbing wildly.

“My poor child, my poor dear boy!” said my father. “My heart bleeds at the thought of the loneliness in store for you. You must see, my son, that I have not long to live; I feel that I have made my last round of visits to-day. We must soon bid each other farewell, my dear child. I shall leave you alone in the world, without fortune, without relatives, without even a protector! I have nothing to bequeath to you but an unsullied name, that I once hoped to make illustrious. Alas! that was not to be! But you, my son, will you not achieve something for your father’s sake? Will you not make an effort to rise from the obscurity to which fate condemned him? You are not without ability, and you can, if you choose, elevate yourself above the common herd. During your childhood, as you know, I would not consent to torment you with studies that had no attraction for you. Do not make me regret my indulgence, my dear son. Now that you will soon be without a friend or adviser, and have your adopted sister to take care of, it is time for you to put away childish things and become a man, in order to protect yourself and her. Can I depend upon you, Dmitri?”

“Yes, Father,” I replied, choking down my sobs.

“Never forget that there is nothing half so precious as your honor,” continued my father. “Suffer everything, — hunger, thirst, even death itself, if need be! — rather than commit a base or dishonorable act. Never attack one who is weaker than yourself; respect the poor and unfortunate; never cringe to the rich and powerful. Recollect that a man’s worth depends entirely upon personal merit,

and that the humblest peasant is the peer of the throned czar, if his heart is pure and his life upright. Be honest, truthful, and just. Your poverty and isolation will perhaps expose you to many temptations, but never yield to them, Dmitri. Choose death rather than dishonor!"

I have never forgotten those words.

We sat in silence a long time. I had taken my father's hand in mine, and was clasping it tightly, as if hoping in this way to keep him with me.

Sacha had stolen noiselessly in, and was kneeling beside me.

After a little, he spoke again, but in a much feebler voice this time.

"Listen to me, my children," he said tenderly. "Now, I know that death is so near, — don't sob so, Sacha, dear, — I must talk with you and tell you what you had better do. I have given much thought to the subject. It would not be hard for me to die if it were not for my anxiety concerning your future. I have a friend in Moscow. You have heard me speak of him, Dmitri. His name is Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff. We were playmates in childhood. He, his brother Alexis, and I were also fellow students at the University in Moscow; and though circumstances have caused us to drift apart, and almost lose sight of each other, I have always felt a deep affection for him, and have every reason to believe that his sentiments toward me have undergone no change. I have therefore written to him, explaining the situation in which you will be placed. Heaven grant that he replies in time for me to know that you will have a protector before our last farewell! But alas! my strength is failing fast! The end is near at hand. Dmitri, if this hope should not be



realized, my last request is that you should acquire a good education, — I have been very much to blame; I ought not to have allowed you to neglect your studies so much, perhaps."

"Oh, Father, don't say that! You acted for the best. I will work now, I give you my word I will! You don't know how hard I will study, — and Sacha, too, shall have an education."

"She will have much less difficulty in acquiring it than you will, I think," said my father, stroking the little brown head tenderly. "But don't allow yourself to become discouraged, my dear, dear boy. Patience and perseverance will conquer all things; and though you may not be very fond of books, you are very patient, are you not, Mitia?"

"Yes, Father; and determined, too, when I once make up my mind to do anything."

And almost unconsciously I clenched my fists as I thought of the struggle before me. Ah, if physical strength had been the only requisite! — still, that might be of no slight assistance.

My father seemed to read my thoughts, for he laid his burning hand on the brawny shoulders of which I was so proud, and said, —

"Fortunately you are strong and well, and a few privations will do you no harm. Perhaps they will even be an advantage to you. But this child, this frail delicate flower — I feel very anxious about her, — even more anxious than about you, Mitia. What shall we do about her, my son?"

"God only knows!" I sighed.

"I am not afraid so long as I have Mitia," said Sacha, quickly.

“Dear child!” exclaimed my father, deeply touched. And he pressed us both to his heart.

From that time on, my father failed rapidly. The next morning he tried to go out and visit his patients as usual; but this proved an impossibility, as he had predicted; and he seated himself in the large armchair which I had placed by the open window, for the one thing absolutely necessary to him now was air. Every few minutes his labored breathing was interrupted by fits of terrible suffocation, or of frightful coughing, which shook him from head to foot, and left him completely exhausted.

The sight of his sufferings was agony to me, and I hid behind the sofa, trembling all over with grief and impotent rage; but Sacha, more courageous than I, remained beside him, tenderly wiping off the cold sweat that bedewed his forehead, bathing his temples with fresh water and aromatic vinegar, and fanning him gently with a big palm-leaf. Indeed, I could not but marvel at the skill with which she replaced the pillows and cushions about his shoulders, and the promptness with which she handed him the desired glass of cold tea or lemonade before he even had time to express a wish for it.

During the week that followed, our little cottage was constantly thronged with neighbors who came to offer assistance or express their sympathy; but as a general thing they remained seated in silence upon the benches that lined the walls. Occasionally one of them would awkwardly rise, and say,—

“Life is hard, Fédor Illitch. Rest will be sweet to you.”

“Yes, brother.”

“May eternal happiness be your portion!”

"I thank you."

"God be with you!"

Then the visitor would steal out, shaking his head sorrowfully. The women wept softly as they sipped their tea.

"Poor soul, his time has come!" they often exclaimed compassionately.

Every human soul in the village grieved sincerely, for everybody loved my father. Every one, even the humblest peasant, had experienced numerous proofs of his kindness of heart and unfailing generosity.

One afternoon as we were all sitting around him, the door opened, and the Princess Lebanoff appeared upon the threshold. I did not even know that she was in the neighborhood. Her cousin, the venerable Prince Arcadion Sémonovitch Békounine, was with her.

"They tell me you are seriously ill, Fédor Illitch," she remarked, as she entered.

I was struck by her foreign accent. Though she spoke Russian very correctly, one could see that it was not the language she used ordinarily. I learned afterwards that she spoke French almost invariably. Mme. Lebanoff was, in every sense of the word, a great lady; but she had always evinced a marked respect for my father; and even at that sad time, I noticed the deference she manifested, and the graceful ease with which my father answered her. To other people, the lady's manner was extremely haughty. Meanwhile our humble friends had discreetly retired.

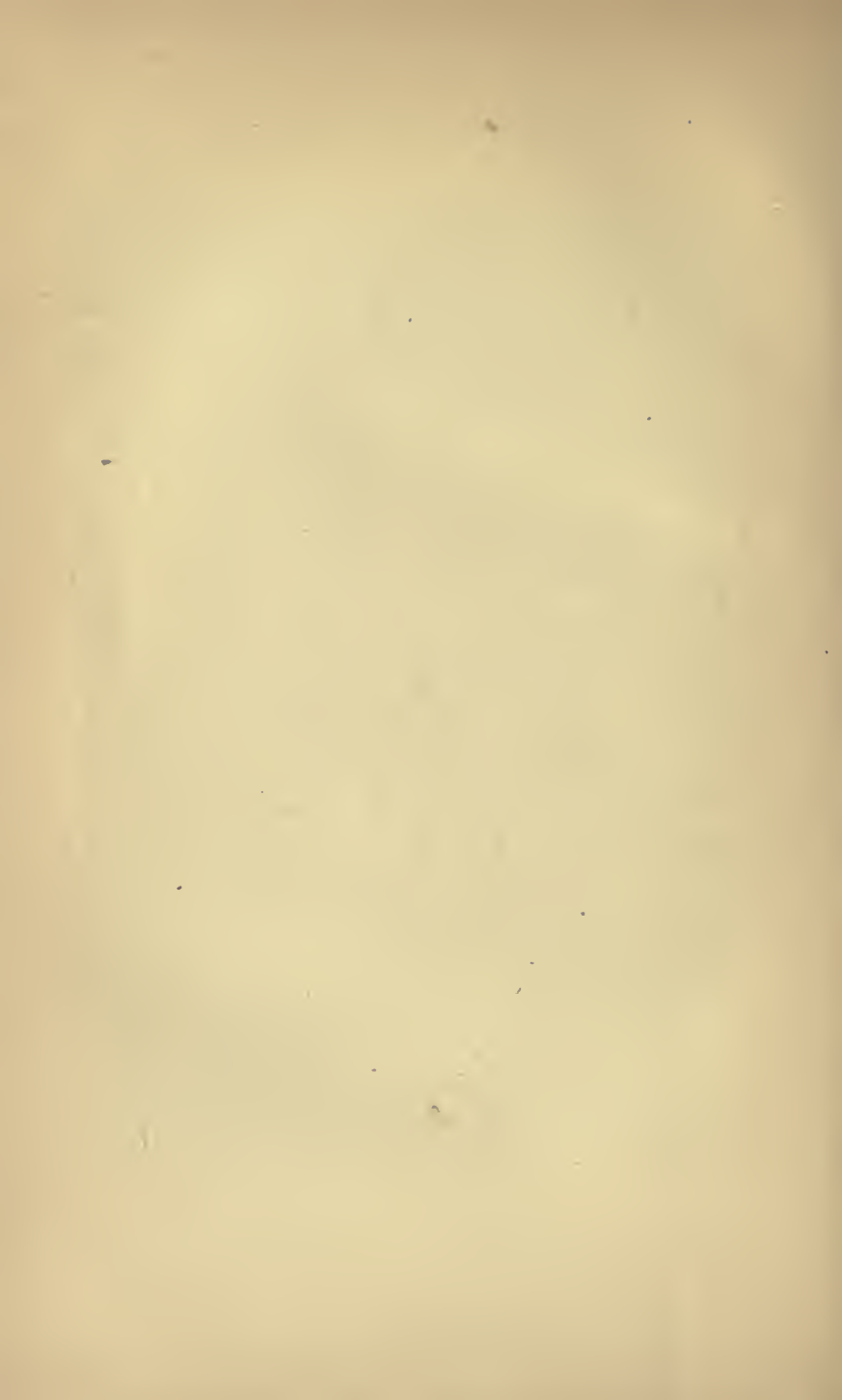
"Very ill indeed, Daria Alexandrovna," replied my father. "I have not many more days to live now."

"You may recover."

"No, I am doomed. I submit to my fate. Dmitri, bring a chair for the princess."



“THAT CHILD IS CHARMING!”





“Is that your son?”

“My only son.”

“And that little girl, I see there?”

“Is my adopted daughter.”

“Ah!”

As she continued her conversation with my father, Mme. Lebanoff drew from her belt a long-handled tortoise-shell eyeglass, and began to examine Sacha. Soon, pausing abruptly in the middle of a remark, she exclaimed, pointing to my sister with her lorgnette, —

“Do you know, Fédor Illitch, that that child is charming, — positively charming? She certainly is not a peasant by birth.”

“I know nothing whatever about her origin,” replied my father.

“Is it possible? Well, she is a little beauty, I assure you; and I am certainly a judge. What lovely eyes she has, and what hair! Such an exquisite profile, too! Yes, she is that rarest of all things, — a true aristocrat in appearance. Come here, my dear, and let me get a better look at you. Arcadion Sémonovitch, is she not charming?”

“Truly charming,” responded the old nobleman, bowing gallantly.

The princess took Sacha’s little brown hands in hers, and again burst out into enthusiastic praises of the embarrassed child’s grace and beauty. I was amazed, for though I loved Sacha dearly, it had never once occurred to me to ask whether she were pretty or ugly.

“She is a perfect beauty, I assure you!” exclaimed the princess. “What a divine creature one could make of a child like this! What do you intend to do with her, Fédor Illitch?”

My father's face clouded.

"Alas! the thought of the child's future appalls me. I can only leave her fate to Providence. I am a poor man, and can make no provision for her; but I have written to an old schoolmate in Moscow, and I hope and believe that he will take charge of these poor children after my death."

The lady's eyes sparkled with delight at these words.

"An old schoolmate!" she exclaimed. "What could a man do with a child like that? No, no, you must give her to me."

"To you?"

"Yes, to me. Do you doubt my ability to rear her properly?"

"Certainly not. Still —"

"Don't make any more objections, I beg of you, my dear Térentieff; I will not listen to them. This child is charming, and it would be a positive crime, to let her vegetate here; I beg your pardon, Fédor Illitch, — but that fact must be apparent to any one. She was born to shine in society. She has noble blood in her veins, unquestionably, and she ought to be restored to her proper sphere; that is what I propose to do, my friend, — with your permission, of course."

My father seemed greatly perplexed.

"Why, in Heaven's name, should you object?" cried the princess, impetuously. "I offer the child a superior education, every comfort, and a place in the best society. You have nothing to give her but the possible protection of an old schoolmate, and yet you hesitate!"

"If I were sure that the arrangement would be permanent," murmured my father, anxiously.

"Oh, nothing can last forever in this world," responded Mme. Lebanoff, carelessly. "You adopted her yourself, and now propose passing her over to an old friend. Why should not I do the same, if need be?"

"God is my witness that it is not of my own free will I abandon her," faltered my father; "but —"

"Don't have a worse opinion of me than I deserve, Fédor Illitch. If I ask you for the child, it is for her own good, rest assured."

"What do you think of Mme. Lebanoff's proposal, Sacha?" asked my father.

"I don't want to leave Dmitri," stammered Sacha, drawing closer to me.

"That big boy?" responded the princess, haughtily. "Why, that is all nonsense, child. How could he take care of you? How could he procure the masters that you need, and the money to pay them. All this will cost a good deal, I assure you."

"I thank you for your generous offer, Daria Alexandrovna," answered my father; "but you must forgive me, if I say that I cannot accept it unless my friend refuses to take charge of the child. I confess that I should prefer a less exalted position in life for her; but, as she may find herself without protection, I thank you for offering yours, and under those circumstances, shall be glad to accept it."

"But only as a last resort, I see," retorted the princess, dryly. "Well, I shall not retract my promise. I have taken a great fancy to the little girl, so I will consent to your conditions. When do you expect to hear from your friend?"

"I may never hear from him," murmured my father, despondently.

“Then if you do not recover, — and there is very little chance of that, I fear, my good Téreنتieff, — and if your friend does not give you a satisfactory answer, I am to have the child; and she will have no cause to regret it, I assure you. Dear little thing! I love her already. Arcadion, confess that she is a perfect beauty.”

She caught Sacha up in her arms and kissed her affectionately, without appearing to notice my little sister's evident desire to avoid the caress; then, seeing that my father seemed greatly exhausted, she concluded her visit with a few commonplaces, expressive of a hope that he might speedily be restored to health, and gracefully retired. Our hearts were heavier than ever when she left us. Sacha wept so bitterly that my father at last called her to him, and in spite of his great weakness, tried to make her understand that it was impossible for him to refuse Mme. Lebanoff's offer. Uncertain as this proffered protection might be, he could die with a more tranquil mind if he knew that she was provided for. So conquering my own grief, I united my entreaties to his; but poor Sacha still rebelled.

“Oh, Dmitri, let me stay with you,” she pleaded. “What will become of me if I have to go with that lady? I am afraid of her. Oh, keep me with you!”

We were unspeakably wretched. Suspense and the likelihood of a speedy separation made the sadness of these last days of my father's life all the more poignant.

My father was dying; the only thing that seemed to keep him alive was the hope of a letter from Nicholas Bérézoff, and this letter did not come.

At last the hour of parting came. Words are powerless to describe the anguish that filled my soul when I saw the

light of consciousness slowly fade out of my father's eyes, and the terrible and mysterious shadow of death settle down upon his features, — the dread change one can never forget when he has once seen it upon a beloved face. But once more his eyes opened and met my agonized gaze. "Courage!" murmured the livid lips.

Then all was over. I rushed out into the old shed like one bereft of reason, and throwing myself face downward on the ground, wept as if my heart would break.

Dead! my father dead! It seemed to me that everything had been swept away with him. The immensity of my loss overwhelmed me. I was alone in the world!



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A CRUEL DISAPPOINTMENT.

SEVERAL days had elapsed. The remains of my beloved parent had been interred in the dreary little cemetery on the plain just outside the village. I realized now that all was indeed over;—that I could never hope to see my dear father again, or hear his voice, or meet his loving gaze. How dreary the cottage seemed! I could not bear the sight of his big armchair, which appeared to be always waiting for him. The books he had read, his inkstand and pen, his very garments,—all seemed to be expecting his return; and he would never return.

I did not crave sympathy in my bereavement; on the contrary, I shunned it, and would not even allow Sacha to mourn with me. I roamed about the fields all day, with my good dog Snap for my sole companion. It seemed to me that he understood me better than any one else. He even seemed to realize our loss. Sometimes he got up and wandered around the room; then (when the hour came at which my father had been wont to return) he went to the door, and scratched and barked; and after waiting awhile in vain, howled wildly and lugubriously.

I do not know how long this state of stupor would have lasted, if I had not been aroused from it by Sacha's departure. The princess sent for her one morning. She was about to start for Nice, her messenger, Prince Békounine,

said, and he had come for the little girl, in accordance with the agreement made with Fédor Illitch.

Our grief and consternation were intense. How bitterly I reproached myself now for having neglected my dear little sister, and rejected her loving sympathy in the great bereavement which should have united us even more closely! It is generally so in life: one seldom shows one's real appreciation of the society of those one loves, or manifests half one's real affection for them; then comes separation or death, and after that, lifelong regret.

We pleaded in vain for a reprieve. We might yet receive a letter from M. Bérézoff. Might we not be allowed at least a few days to accustom ourselves to the idea of parting? But Mme. Lebanoff was inexorable. She could not defer her departure another day, and Sacha bade me a tearful farewell. We did not part without exchanging a solemn promise, however.

"Sacha, as soon as I am grown, and I have secured a good situation, I shall come for you, wherever you may be. Don't forget it."

"I shall wait for you, Mitia, — I promise you that."

Then the prince took her away.

Two hours afterwards, hearing the sound of carriage wheels, I ran to the door, and saw Mme. Lebanoff's big travelling carriage pass, drawn by three superb horses. Sacha's little brown head was leaning out of the window; she waved me a farewell, and the vehicle disappeared from sight in a thick cloud of dust.

I re-entered our deserted home with a breaking heart. I passed two days in utter solitude; on the third came a letter from Moscow, addressed to my father. I tore open the envelope, and read the following : —

BÉRÉZOFF MANSION, THE PÉTROVKA,  
MOSCOW, Dec. 25, 18—.

MY DEAR FÉDOR ILLITCH, — You certainly have every reason to believe that I have not forgotten you, and that I shall be only glad to comply with your wishes. I should indeed be the possessor of a bad and ungrateful heart if I failed to remember you. Are you not the man of all others to whom I am most indebted? Can I ever forget that it was through your aid I was enabled to escape without disgrace from an unfortunate dilemma in which my own imprudence had placed me, and that my elevation to the high position I now hold was due in a great measure to your wise councils? Besides, did you not save my life when I had that attack of malignant typhoid fever while we were fellow students at the University? But for your care and assiduous nursing, I should certainly have died. Consequently, I shall but partially repay my manifold obligations to you by taking charge of your son, if you are taken from him. Immediately upon receipt of your letter, I made arrangements for entering him at the Saint-Vladimir Gymnasium, the best preparatory school for our famous University. Give yourself no anxiety in regard to your son's future, my dear Fédor; I will take charge of that. I am rich and childless, — with no near relatives since the mysterious disappearance of my brother Alexis. I do not know whether you ever heard the particulars. Many years have passed since I heard from him, and it is more than probable that he is dead. I certainly have every reason to fear it, for I cannot believe that he would have allowed so long a time to elapse without communicating with me if he were still alive.

I will not express a hope for your restoration to health, my dear friend, for I feel that it would be a mere waste of words. You are a brave man, and you are prepared to face death; besides, you are the best possible judge of your condition; but I shall always regret that we did not have an opportunity to meet again, and to exchange one more cordial grasp of the hand, as

in the days of our youth. God bless you in this life and in the life to come.

N. BÉRÉZOFF.

Enclosed is a Hundred Rouble note for your son.

So my fate was decided! But not a single word in regard to Sacha! This oversight seemed incomprehensible to me, and for the first time I rejoiced that she was safe with the princess. Poor child! sensitive as she was, how could she have borne the thought of presenting herself uninvited at the house of a stranger?

My preparations for my journey were soon completed. I packed some linen, a few other articles of clothing, and some papers that had belonged to my father, in a small valise; then I paid a visit to our priest and made him a present of our horse Vodka, and the old *télégue*. Afterwards, I bade everybody good-by, not even excepting Porphyre, who seemed utterly unable to comprehend such a marvellous thing as my intended departure. I entrusted Snap to his care, for in spite of the grief it caused me to part with him, I dared not take him to the house of my unknown benefactor without permission; and the next morning I departed on the wagon of a neighboring farmer for the little town of V——, where I took the train for Moscow.

I had never been out of our village before, and the wonderful sights I beheld filled me with astonishment; but I felt it obligatory upon me to conceal this fact under an air of profound indifference.

I reached Moscow early on a December morning, with only a few roubles in my pocket, and a heart heavy with grief and loneliness. I little suspected what new trials awaited me there!

If I had had more experience I should have so arranged

as not to arrive in this strange city at such an early hour. The recollections of my first entrance into Moscow are far from pleasant. The sun had just risen, but its pale rays seemed unable to force their way through the leaden clouds that obscured the sky. A heavy frost, the forerunner of a fresh fall of snow, covered everything; and a chill that penetrated to the very marrow of my bones seized me as I stepped from the train which had brought me, my sorrows, my hopes, and my scanty wardrobe, to this new abode.

I made my way hastily through the crowd of importunate coachmen and porters. I did not need their services; my valise was not heavy, and I counted upon reaching my benefactor's house without making any further inroads upon the small sum of money I had in my pocket.

The amount was now very small. One imperial,<sup>1</sup> two roubles, and a few kopecks, — this was all that remained of the hundred roubles I had received from M. Bérézoff.

For years I had longed to behold the splendors of Moscow. I had often dreamed of its graceful, richly ornamented spires, its gilded cupolas, and its marble palaces. How entirely different were the scenes that met my gaze, as I roamed for more than an hour through narrow, crooked streets bordered with shabby log-huts in no way superior to those occupied by the poorest peasants of our village! Through the rough board-fences that enclosed the tiny yards, I caught occasional glimpses of ragged and dirty children; and though a two story dwelling of more respectable appearance was visible here and there, the general aspect of the locality was poverty stricken and squalid in the extreme.

<sup>1</sup> A coin worth about four dollars.



Turning at last into a broader thoroughfare, I perceived an omnibus that had just stopped to pick up a passenger. I questioned the driver, and finding that he would take me to the centre of the city for the very modest sum of five kopecks, I entered the vehicle, and in a few minutes found myself riding along through broad, clean, and well paved streets. As we whirled around a corner, the Kremlin, with its massive walls, burst upon my wondering gaze, — the Kremlin, with its eighteen towers, its five cathedrals, its convents, its dozen or more churches, its countless gilded cupolas, and gorgeously painted turrets, now slightly powdered with snow.

A feeling of awe took possession of me. Now, I indeed realized that this was Moscow, — the Holy city! Here I might justly feel proud to call myself a Russian. Here, I was in the real sanctuary of my country, in the very heart of my native land, the real capital of our nation!

Recollections of its heroic defence in 1812 recurred to my mind. I pictured Napoleon's fierce but futile attacks upon our citadel; and then the flames of an immense fire that embraced the entire city, mounting heavenward, — a fire lighted by that city's valiant defenders; and in a transport of enthusiastic patriotism, I cried aloud, "Long live Russia!"

The words had scarcely escaped me before I was deeply ashamed of them, so great was the astonishment of the people around me, who evidently thought me an escaped lunatic.

Resolved to be more cautious in the expression of my feelings hereafter, I left the omnibus when it reached the terminus of the route, and after inquiring my way several

times, I at last reached the door of Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff's dwelling. It was a handsome house, but I was surprised to see that every window was closed, and every curtain down.

"Nicholas Ivanovitch must be a late riser," I said to myself, as I lifted the massive knocker.

I rapped; but no one answered the summons, so I knocked again, louder this time, but with no better success. A third and fourth attempt proved equally futile. At last, a man sitting in the doorway of the adjoining house asked me rather curtly if I was trying to batter the door down.

"I want to see M. Bérézoff," I replied.

"Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Don't you know that Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff was buried yesterday?"

"Buried yesterday," I repeated mechanically, quite stunned by this unexpected announcement.

"Yes, buried. It was quite time, as he died on Tuesday," added the man, half sneeringly.

"Was he sick long? What was the matter with him?" I stammered.

"He died very suddenly. He must have been taken ill after dinner, the servants said. He went into his study to write, — he was always writing, — and they found him there the next morning seated at his desk, — dead. Apoplexy, probably. He lived too well, I suppose. He was a rich old bachelor, and never did an hour's work in his life. We poor people have nothing of that sort to fear; that is one comfort.

"The news seems to astonish you very much," continued



“‘I WANT TO SEE M. BÉRÉZOFF,’ I REPLIED.”



the garrulous porter; "I wonder, though, that you have n't heard of it before. Everybody has been talking about it. The strangest thing about the whole affair, though, is that he died while he was making his will, or at least trying to."

"What do you mean?" I asked wonderingly.

"Why, as I told you before, he died while he was at his desk writing, and what he was writing at the time proved to be his will. It began in the usual way, they say; then came something like this, I believe: 'In the fear of being stricken down by death, etc., I desire to make my will, and so I leave this to this one, and that to that one; and lastly, in default of natural heirs, I hereby designate as the heir to all the rest of my property, the son of my dearest friend, young Dmitri —'"

"Dmitri?" I exclaimed involuntarily; "Dmitri what?"

"That was all. Death overtook him in the middle of the name, and no one will ever know who this young Dmitri was."

"But I know!" I thought; "I know!"

"If you take such an interest in the affair, why don't you buy a newspaper?" continued the porter. "In the 'Muscovite Chronicle' you'll find a full account of it in black and white."

I thanked the man, and ran off to purchase the paper he had mentioned. This journal confirmed the truth of his story. My father's old friend was dead, and his house was closed. I had his letter in my pocket, and I read it over again. It had been written on the very day of his death, and probably only a short time before he began the will by which he intended to bequeath the bulk of his fortune to me, for his letter proved beyond a doubt that I was the



young Dmitri referred to. Though greatly depressed by the sad news, it was not the loss of fortune that grieved me most. Reared as I had been, I attached very little value to money; and my chief regret was that this old friend of my father — a man who could have talked to me of my beloved parent, and told me about his youth, and who seemed to be the only connecting link between my present desolation and my past happiness — should have been removed from earth.

I sat a long time on a bench in the neighboring park, reading and re-reading the newspaper and M. Bérézoff's letter alternately. What would become of me now? Unpractical as I was, this question could not fail to present itself to my mind. What would become of me in this strange city, without relatives, money, or friends?

I had eaten nothing that morning, and after a while my youthful stomach became clamorous for food. It takes a good deal to deprive a fourteen-year-old boy of his appetite; so I entered the first bake-shop I came to, and purchased a loaf of bread.

Seating myself on a huge pile of snow on the river-bank almost opposite the Kremlin, I ate my frugal meal.

This Moscow bread was certainly much better than that of my native village, for I had bought the white loaf which Sacha and I had always considered such a delicacy; but she was not here to share it, — fortunately for her! It was the bread of exile, and it seemed very bitter to me.

As I ate, I watched some men who were working on the river-bank. They were very poorly clad, but they did not seem at all troubled by their humble condition. On the contrary, several of them were singing, and their not unmusical voices rang out cheerfully on the morning air.

“There are some men who are no better off than I am,” I said to myself. “They are obliged to work for their living, and yet they seem cheerful and even contented with their lot. I have lost all who were dear to me, it is true, and my loneliness saddens and discourages me; but ought I to yield to this despondency? Did I not promise my dear father to be an honor to the name he bequeathed to me? I am an orphan, and poor, but I am well and strong, and no milksop! Shall I give up in despair like a girl? No, that would be cowardly!”

And I sprang to my feet, resolved to triumph over fate.

One hope remained. Nicholas Bérézoff had said in his letter that he had entered me as a pupil in Saint-Vladimir College. Might there not still be a chance of my admission there, in spite of my benefactor’s death? I resolved to satisfy myself on this point.

A policeman told me how to find my way to the college, which was in the heart of the city, about twenty minutes’ walk from the Bérézoff mansion.

As I approached it, I was greatly impressed by the imposing appearance of the immense granite structure, with its long colonnade and lofty pillars. Over the main doorway was a *bas relief* depicting Saint Vladimir in royal robes, with a crown upon his head, surrounded with youths holding books and philosophical apparatus of divers kinds. Below it was this inscription in Latin: “Learning makes all men equal;” and above, in gold letters, “Saint-Vladimir Gymnasium.”

As I paused in front of the building, one of the doors opened, and a crowd of young men and boys came out. It was noon, and the morning recitations had ended.

I gazed with intense curiosity at these students, my

future comrades, — at least I hoped so, — as they filed out of the building and dispersed in different directions. They all wore red, blue, or white caps, and I judged that the color of the cap indicated the class to which its wearer belonged, — a supposition that was entirely correct, as I soon learned. Most of them were very neatly dressed; some few, however, were plainly, even shabbily clad. All carried books under their arms.

The ponderous door closed again, and I remained standing in the same spot, undecided what course to pursue. Should I venture to present myself before the president? Had I the slightest chance of admission? I must of course make the attempt; but first of all, I had better freshen myself up a little, if I wished to make a favorable impression. The dust of travel was still thick upon me, and my shoes were covered with mud. The cleanly habits I had learned from my father, who was extremely fastidious in all such matters, made me unwilling to appear before any one in such a plight, and the best thing for me to do was to find some modest inn where I could get a room and change my clothing.

In a narrow side street, not far from the college, I discovered a small green house that I thought would suit me, as the sign-board bearing the words, "The White Bear," which creaked dismally in front of it, declared it to be a place of public entertainment. On entering I found myself in a low, dingy room, redolent with the fumes of liquor and poor tobacco. For an instant I felt strongly inclined to beat a hasty retreat; but as the accommodations were so poor the rates must be correspondingly low, and cheapness was the chief consideration with me now.

An extremely unprepossessing-looking old woman was

sitting by the window, knitting, when I entered, and several men were sprawled out, asleep, in front of the stove.

“I would like a room. Have you any vacant?” I asked.

“A room, or a bed?” inquired my hostess, glancing sharply at me out of the corner of her eye.

“A bed?” I repeated, not understanding her in the least.

“Yes, a bed in a room with seven, or eight others, or a room to yourself?”

“Oh, a room to myself, of course,” I exclaimed, glancing at her disreputable looking guests.

“But will you pay for it?”

“Of course,” I replied, displaying my five-rouble gold piece.

“Very well; come this way, little father.”

I followed her up a dark and narrow staircase to a small room directly under the roof. The only articles of furniture in it were a dilapidated bed and a rickety chair.

It was a miserable hole; but it suited me, or rather my purse, all the better for that.

“Will this do, little father?” asked the old woman.

“If you will sweep and dust it, and bring me a bucket of fresh water immediately.”

“It’s a nice, clean room,” whined the old woman.

“You won’t find a roach in it.”

“I should think not. It’s so cold that even a warmly clad Christian can hardly keep alive here. It isn’t very likely that a roach would stay any longer than it could help,” I replied good naturedly. In the mean time, my hostess had found a broom, — or rather the remains of one, for there was not much more than the handle of it left, — and she now proceeded to sweep off the cobwebs and dirt

that covered the tiny window. Soon afterwards, she brought up a big stone pitcher full of water, and I proceeded to take a bath.

How many times I have felt grateful to my father for accustoming me from infancy to the cold baths which are so healthful and invigorating, alike to mind and body.

Afterwards, when I found myself once more arrayed in clean linen, neatly brushed clothes, and brightly polished shoes, I felt like another boy; and it was with a much lighter heart that I descended the stairway of the White Bear.

I had taken the precaution to lock the door of my room and put the key in my pocket, for I felt sure that the old woman would examine my belongings during my absence, if it was in her power to do it.

"Won't you have something to eat now?" she asked, seeing that I was about to go out.

"No, not until evening."

"You've left your valise, so you'll be sure to come back, I suppose, little father?"

"You need have no anxiety about that," I replied, congratulating myself upon the precaution I had taken.

And a few minutes afterwards, I again found myself standing in front of Saint-Vladimir College.



## CHAPTER IX.

### HOMELESS AND FRIENDLESS IN A STRANGE CITY.

HAVING become a little accustomed to the edifice, it seemed less imposing when I beheld it a second time, and I walked boldly up to the north door and rang the bell.

A man in uniform, with brass buttons bearing the college device, promptly appeared.

"I would like to see the superintendent," I said deferentially.

"Right corridor, stairway to the left, second story, first door," was the janitor's rather surly reply.

I obeyed his instructions; and soon found myself in the presence of a clerk, who immediately motioned me to a second clerk, who in turn handed me over to a third functionary, a very elegant young gentleman, who seemed to be chiefly engrossed in keeping a glass in his right eye, but who finally condescended to ask my name.

"Dmitri Féodorovitch Térentieff, the pupil entered by Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff," I answered.

The young man's only response was a frightful grimace, the real object of which was the retention of the refractory eyeglass in its proper place; then he disappeared behind a baize-covered door.

"Wait a moment, Dmitri Fédorovitch. The superintendent will soon be at liberty," he said to me, on his return a few minutes afterward.

My heart throbbed wildly as I seated myself upon a cushioned bench. What would the president's decision be? Was it at all likely that he would admit into the institution a homeless, friendless, penniless boy, a stranger in the city? But if he refused, what would become of me?

I was startled by the sharp peal of an electric bell near me.

"Pass in, Dmitri Fédorovitch," said the young man, who was now engaged in admiring himself in a small pocket-mirror; "the president is waiting for you."

I pushed open the baize-door, and found myself in a large, bare, and cheerless room. An immense desk covered with books, pamphlets, and paper formed a sort of oasis in the middle of this desert; and almost hidden from sight behind the huge piles of books, sat a small, bald-headed, elderly gentleman. On hearing me enter, he raised his head, disclosing to view a kindly, honest, smoothly shaven face, and took a quick look at me over the tops of his gold-bowed spectacles; but I had barely time to catch a glimpse of his features before he resumed his writing, so rapid was his glance.

I stood there, the picture of embarrassment. Ought I to address him, seat myself, be silent, or remain standing? It seemed to me that the best thing for me to do was to wait until the president saw fit to speak to me, and I did so.

He seemed to have forgotten my presence, and his pen flew swiftly over the paper as he wrote on and on. The

ticking of the clock that hung on the wall between a thermometer and barometer, was the only sound that broke the stillness; the minute hand had nearly completed its round, and still I stood there motionless, scarcely daring to breathe, perched like a stork first upon one foot, then upon the other, and twirling my cap in my hands.

Suddenly I felt an ominous tickling in my nostrils, probably the result of my long revery on the snowbank by the river-side, and before I could repress it, a loud "atchi!" resounded through the room; then another, and another, and another. It seemed to me that I should never stop. Deeply mortified, I glanced at the superintendent, and found that he was surveying me over the tops of his spectacles with an air of profound astonishment.

"What are you doing here? What is your name?" he asked abruptly.

I was so unprepared for this question that I could make no coherent response.

"Eh, what? What do you say?"

"But, sir —"

"Ivan Alexandrovitch Pérevsky is my name."

"I have come, Ivan Alexandrovitch, to ask you to kindly admit me as a pupil," I faltered, summoning up all my courage.

"Where is your father? Why did n't he come with you?"

"I have lost my father."

"Your mother, then?"

"She is dead."

"Your guardian?"

"I have none."

"Then your uncle or aunt, or your grandparents, or

somebody?" said the superintendent, a little impatiently, glancing at his papers as if he longed to return to them again; and yet his manner was really so kind in spite of its brusqueness, that I conceived a real affection for him then and there.

"I have no relatives. There is no one who takes any interest in me," I said in reply to his last question.

The president looked at me searchingly for a moment.

"Do you suppose that I receive pupils without any references?" he asked, at last.

"My name was sent in."

"By whom?"

"By Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff, a friend of my father."

"Why did n't you say so before? Your name?"

"Dmitri Fédorovitch Térentieff."

The president pressed the knob of an electric bell. A gentleman about fifty years old, very tall and imposing in appearance, entered immediately. It was M. Sarévine, the assistant superintendent, as I learned shortly afterwards.

"Paul Pétrovitch, here is a new pupil, Dmitri Fédorovitch Térentieff, entered by Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff. Will you have the goodness to see if everything is all right?"

And the president, without another word, resumed his writing, while I followed Paul Pétrovitch into an adjoining room.

There he consulted an official register and read aloud the following entry: —

"Dmitri Fédorovitch Térentieff, entered by Nicholas Ivanovitch Bérézoff, a resident of Moscow, — born in Sitovka, aged fourteen years. Tuition paid one year in advance."

The assistant superintendent asked me no questions, and I thought it useless to tell him that I was entirely without resources. It was an immense relief to find that my tuition was paid for one year in advance. Before that period had elapsed, I must devise some means for the continuance of my studies.

"Your papers are all right," remarked Paul Pétrovitch, "and from this time you may consider yourself one of the pupils of the Saint-Vladimir Gymnasium."

I asked him when I should begin my studies.

"Immediately," was the reply. "One of the recitations of your class will begin in a few minutes, and you would better attend it. There are three classes in the college: the third, second, and first classes, each of which is divided into two sections. The prescribed course of study for each class lasts two years. The classification is as follows:—

- Third Class,	2d section,	age of pupils	12 to 13 years.
"	"	1st "	" " " 13 to 14 "
Second	"	2d "	" " " 14 to 15 "
"	"	1st "	" " " 15 to 16 "
First	"	2d "	" " " 16 to 17 "
"	"	1st "	" " " 17 to 18 "

"Your age places you in the first section of the Third Class. You must try to keep there. Your section has a French theme and an exercise for translation this afternoon, and you will have a chance to see how you stand in this study, which holds a very important place in our curriculum."

Paul Pétrovitch then took me to the class-room reserved for the first section of the Third Class, stopping on the way at the office of the bursar, who supplied me with pencils,



pens, and note-books, as well as a program of the course of study. I examined this last in the brief interval before the commencement of the recitation, and was appalled at the number of studies I was expected to pursue before that most terrible of ordeals, — the final examination! Russian, Latin, Greek, French, German, literature, religion, sacred history, the history of Russia, natural history, physics, chemistry, mathematics, the differential and integral calculus, — all these subjects danced about before my eyes in the wildest confusion. Should I ever succeed in mastering them? Then I turned the leaf to see the list of classical authors I should be obliged to read: Tacitus, Virgil, Herodotus, Homer, Sophocles, Montaigne, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Voltaire, Goethe, Herder, Schiller, — how formidable they appeared, grouped within the horizon of a five years' course of study!

The sharp tap of a ruler upon the master's desk drew my attention from future trials to those of the present time.

This was no dream. I was really a student of Saint-Vladimir College. I was sitting in a spacious class-room, lighted by a long mullioned window; and surrounding me on every side I saw thirty-five or forty boys of my own age, who had hung their red caps on hooks ranged along the wall for that purpose.

So red was the Third Class color, as blue was that of the Second Class, and white that of the First Class.

In spite of my efforts to give my undivided attention to the professor, one question would persist in forcing itself upon my mind. How was I to procure the red cap which seemed to be an essential? Was this head covering so exorbitant in price as to be entirely beyond my reach?

Should I be any less a student of Saint-Vladimir if I was unable to purchase this article of dress? During my wanderings that morning, I had seen several large hat stores on such fashionable thoroughfares as the Pétrovka, the Loubjanka, and Gasètnyi. Were the caps purchased there or at the college? A sudden and profound silence put an abrupt end to my reflections upon this important subject.

“Young gentlemen,” began the professor in French, “I will now give you a passage for translation.”

“How lucky it is for me that I have French first!” I said to myself. “It is almost the only modern language I know anything about.”

How glad I felt now that my father had insisted upon the daily use of this refined and euphonious language in our little household! And what a sigh of relief I gave, as I thought of the French fables, as amusing as those of our own Yvan Krilof,<sup>1</sup> that Sacha and I had been accustomed to recite to my father every evening! The hope of covering myself with glory took possession of me as I began to write the required translation. It proved to be a page from Molière that the professor had chosen, the speech of Master Jacques in the “Miser,” beginning,—

“Monsieur, puisque vous le voulez, je vous dirai franchement qu'on se moque partout de vous, qu'on nous jette de tous côtés cents brocards, etc.”

And I had fancied myself proficient in French! It did not take me two minutes to discover that this translation was going to be no easy matter. I was obliged to make it without a dictionary of any kind, and what did such expressions as *brocards*, *lésine*, *la fable*, and *la risée*,

<sup>1</sup> The Russian La Fontaine.

*ladre*, and *vilaine* mean? I had never heard these words in ordinary conversation, and I had not the faintest idea of their meaning; and though there were many phrases that I did understand tolerably well, I found it impossible to translate them in any but the most awkward and blundering manner.

I hoped to appear to a little better advantage in the theme. We had a selection from Gogol's "Sorcerer" to put into French, and when I read my version it seemed quite satisfactory.

After the dictation was ended, a profound silence reigned in the class-room until four o'clock, — the stillness being broken only by the scratching of pens and an occasional sigh of discouragement when one of the students found his task too much for him.

M. Lapenelle, the professor of French, was, as I subsequently learned, a Parisian who had resided in Moscow nearly thirty years, and who had initiated hundreds of young Russians into the mysteries of his mother-tongue.

Unconsciously relapsing into that state of abstraction that is my besetting sin, I had sat for some time nibbling the end of my penholder, and absently gazing at the tight-fitting surtout and still youthful face of our instructor, when he glanced up at the clock hanging on the wall, and said, —

"You have only five minutes more, young gentlemen."

And my theme was still uncopied, — scarcely reread, in fact! I was obliged to hand in my scrawl just as it was, erasures, blunders, and all; and I cast an envious glance at my next neighbor, who had just completed an irreproachable copy with a magnificent flourish enclosing the signature, — Serge A. Kratkine.

This elaborate signature gave me an exalted idea of my neighbor's talent, and I blushed deeply when — M. Lapenelle having left the room — Kratkine addressed me with a rather condescending air as he neatly arranged his note-books in a morocco portfolio.

“You are a new scholar, are you not?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“What is your name?”

I told him; whereupon he informed me that his father, Arcade Nicolaiévitch, bore the title of Councillor; that is to say, he belonged to the sixth grade of nobility. Seeing that this announcement made no impression on me, — the fact is, I had never heard anything about these different grades in Sitovka, my father having entirely neglected to instruct me in regard to the *tsin*, or civil nobility, of our country, — Serge was kind enough to explain the laws that govern it. I thus learned that any Russian may elevate himself to the rank of a nobleman by his own exertions; in fact, that it was the easiest thing in the world, as one was merely obliged to pass a certain number of examinations to accomplish it.

“Ordeals, I suppose you mean,” I replied, thinking of those to which the candidates for knighthood had been subjected in mediæval times.

“No; examinations, I tell you. There is my father, for instance. True, he was not a *moujik*; but since the emancipation of the serf even a *moujik* may elevate himself to the rank of a nobleman. My father was the son of the sacristan of the church of Wassili Blaujeuni. You know the church. It is near the Kremlin.”

“Well?”

“Well, he is a nobleman now, and to make himself one,

he has only been obliged to serve the State in a civil capacity, and pass the stipulated examinations."

"Your father has passed six examinations!" I cried, appalled at the thought of the many trying ordeals before me if I, too, desired to rise in the world.

"Twice that number, counting those at the college and University," replied my new friend; "and he has n't finished with them yet, for he has only reached the sixth grade. The title does not become hereditary until one reaches the eighth grade; and as my father, who possesses no private fortune, wishes me to profit by what he has achieved, he will go on with the examinations; but if from any cause he should be obliged to stop before he has reached the eighth grade, I shall be under the necessity of beginning again from the very beginning."

The thought of such marvellous perseverance astonished me. Should I, too, be obliged to pass a dozen or more examinations when I shuddered at the mere mention of the one that awaited me on leaving college?

We had left the class-room, and as Serge put on his cap in the corridor he remarked, —

"You have n't your cap yet, I see. Had n't you better go and get it now?"

"Where?"

"At the bursar's office. I'll show you the way."

Deeply grateful to my new friend, I followed him, though not without some misgivings as to the probable cost of the famous cap.

In the bursar's office I found myself face to face with the same clerk who had furnished me with my exercise-books.

"You have come for your cap, I suppose," he remarked. "Try some on, and take any one that fits you."



I soon made my selection; then I ventured, timidly, —

“Is there anything — what is there to pay, sir?”

“Nothing. The gentleman who entered you paid for everything in advance. Your books will be given to you to-morrow. They, too, are paid for.”

I left the room with a much lighter heart, secretly heaping blessings upon the head of good Nicholas Bérézoff.

Serge was waiting for me at the door.

“Ah, ha! you are really one of us now!” he exclaimed, seeing me reappear. “There is nothing to prevent you from availing yourself of all our privileges now.”

“What privileges?”

“Oh, we have a good many, I assure you. In the first place, we pay only one-fourth of the regular rates at the theatre when we wear our caps. Then, the merchants all make a reduction when they sell to us, and we are admitted free to all the galleries and museums.”

We had left the building, and as we discovered that we were living in the same part of the town, we continued to walk along together.

Serge Arcadieitch, who was certainly very communicative, told me a great deal about himself, his family, his tastes, and his opinions in regard to matters and things in general. It was easy to see that he was an exceedingly sensible and practical fellow, whose ideas were as well regulated and orderly as the lines I had seen traced in his exercise-book. Roving fancies and idle dreams were unknown to him; good sense, frankness, and integrity were evidently his chief characteristics. I took a great liking to him at once, and sincerely congratulated myself upon having had him for a neighbor.

From him, too, I learned many of the rules and regulations that were to govern my new life. "Recitations began," he said, "at seven o'clock in summer and eight in winter. The morning session closed at eleven o'clock in summer and twelve in winter. During the morning session there was a recreation period of half an hour, when students could eat the lunch they brought in the morning, if they chose. At noon, they all went home to dinner, though some of the boys, whose parents resided in the suburbs or at too great a distance in the city, took their meals at some of the boarding-houses kept especially for students."

"Is the board very dear?" I inquired.

"It varies. Down at the corner of the street, where you see that blue sign, you can get a dinner or supper for fifteen or twenty kopecks, — at least so Grichine Yégov tells me."

"I ask because I am far from rich, and must arrange to take my meals at some cheap place. Is it there that your friend Yégov boards?"

"Yes, when he has the money, poor fellow! That is not the case every day, however."

"And when he has no money what does he do?" I asked, with some very natural curiosity, as Grichine Yégov's situation so thoroughly resembled mine.

"Upon my word, I never asked him; but I've heard the boys say that he has been seen to slip up to the bread-basket more than once at recess."

"And what is the bread-basket, pray?"

"It hangs on the wall in the courtyard. When we have finished eating, we put any scraps of food we may have left into this basket. Any student who throws food on the

ground is punished with an extra lesson. Every one is obliged to put the remains of his lunch in the basket, and the contents are given to the poor. It is said that Grichine often hangs around the basket in order to snatch out a piece of bread when no one is looking. It is true, perhaps; but I always feel ashamed of myself when I laugh about it. It is not his fault that he is poor."

"Certainly not," I responded, much more warmly than I might have done if I myself had been rolling in gold, as the saying is.

By this time we had reached the point where our paths diverged, so, after exchanging a cordial shake of the hand with my new friend, I directed my steps toward my dreary lodgings.

Still greatly fatigued from my long journey, as well as from the many exciting events of the long day, I intended to go straight to bed without any supper except the tiny loaf of bread I purchased before entering the house; but the old woman waylaid me as I passed.

"Have some supper, little father, have some supper," she exclaimed. "See the nice *tchi*<sup>1</sup> and hot *racha*<sup>2</sup> I've got for you."

I wanted to refuse, though solely from motives of economy, for I was very hungry, and longed for a plate of the soup that was smoking on the table; but pride forbade in the presence of the *moujiks* seated there. I feared if I refused to dine that they would think it was for want of money,—which would have been the plain truth; and actuated by this laudable reason, I took my seat among them.

I soon despatched the soup, though it consisted princi-

<sup>1</sup> Cabbage soup.

<sup>2</sup> Buckwheat porridge.

pally of greasy water; but the porridge proved too much for me in spite of my long fast, — it reminded me too forcibly of a lukewarm poultice, — and I soon arose to leave the table.

“Wait, you must be thirsty, too. Stop and have a glass of *kvass*.”<sup>1</sup>

“I don’t wish any, thank you.” I had never taken a glass of liquor in my life, and I had no desire to do so now; but the men who were at the table began to laugh boisterously.

“This fine little gentleman must be afraid of burning his throat,” sneered one.

“I believe it’s a girl in disguise,” remarked another.

“No, he’s going to dine with the czar this evening, so he’s saving up for it.”

Blushing deeply with rage and mortification, I took the dirty glass the old woman was holding out, and swallowed the vile stuff at a single draught, though it seemed to set my throat on fire.

“Ah, ha! look at the face he makes!”

“Poor little thing, we’ll have to give him his bottle. Where is his nurse?” asked one *moujik*.

Exasperated beyond endurance by these taunts, I resolved to show these men that I was no child; so pounding upon the table with my fist, I called out to the old woman, —

“This brandy is splendid. Give me another glass!”

A burst of applause greeted this absurd act of bravado, and thus encouraged, I resolved to persist in the noble course I had seen fit to adopt; so I emptied the second

<sup>1</sup> Brandy.





DMITRI'S EXPERIENCE AT HIS LODGING-HOUSE.





glass, though it made the tears rise to my eyes, and it was in a husky voice that I cried, —

“Another glass, mother; and one for each of these gentlemen, please. I’ll pay the bill. To your good health, my —”

But I could not finish the sentence. My knees gave way under me, my head swam wildly. The suffocating atmosphere of the room, the strong odor of tobacco smoke, the nauseating taste of the vile food I had just eaten, the fumes of alcohol which were fast mounting to my brain, the intense shame created by my folly, — all combined to make me unspeakably wretched and ill.

“Air, air, I must have air!” I said to myself; and spilling the entire contents of my third glass on the table as I rose with the others, I started for the staircase leading to my garret.

I must have described several zig-zags during the short journey, for I lurched against a small table loaded with dishes; and a pile of plates fell to the floor with a crash amid the uproarious laughter of the spectators, whose mirth was excited to the highest pitch by this last exploit on my part.

Intoxicated with rage — but why do I use that expression? Was I not, alas! intoxicated before, and not with rage alone? — I aimed a blow at my tormentors; but my arm, which was usually so strong and agile, seemed to be made of lead, and dropped heavily at my side. I staggered violently, and would have fallen if I had not clutched at the wall for support.

The shouts of laughter grew even more boisterous. Enraged, humiliated, sick at heart, I finally succeeded in climbing the stairs and reaching my room, where

I threw myself upon the bed without removing my clothes.

Oh, if my father had seen me at that moment! Tears of shame and remorse streamed down upon my miserable pillow at the thought of my disgrace; but fortunately I soon fell asleep.

## CHAPTER X.

### NEW FACES.

AFTER several hours of heavy slumber, I woke with wildly throbbing temples, head on fire, and throat parched with thirst. I felt weak and miserable in mind, as well as body; but the hardest thing of all to bear was my intense shame at having behaved myself in such a disgraceful manner. I — the son of Fédor Térentieff, who had reared me with such care and solicitude, and who had been a living example of sobriety, moderation, and dignity in every act of his life — I had been intoxicated, I had voluntarily obscured in my soul the divine spark of reason which alone distinguishes us from the brutes!

Oh, how unspeakably wretched I was! I almost wished that the earth would open and swallow me up. It seemed to me that my disgraceful conduct had left its impress on my face, and that every one would see it on the morrow. As I reviewed each detail of this most unfortunate affair, I saw that I had been guilty of that contemptible spirit of bravado which I so bitterly despised in others.

I tossed about, unable to sleep, and at last, toward morning, after having spent the most wretched night of my life — for never before had I been kept awake by the stings of conscience — I made a solemn vow which helped to assuage my regret.

As I had allowed myself to be surprised and worsted by an enemy so despicable as intemperance, I would never touch a drop of ardent spirits again! This vow I have faithfully kept. Never again shall my father's son have to blush for so degrading himself.

Had I known at the time the ingredients employed in the manufacture of the liquors sold in our low taverns and saloons, that knowledge would have more than sufficed to deter me from tasting them. Russian brandy is of a very inferior quality at best. The distillers add a great deal of water to it to increase their profits; but far from rendering it less dangerous in its effect, they impart an unnatural strength to it by means of a mixture of the most heterogeneous articles, such as pepper, copperas, tobacco leaves, nitric acid, and even vitriol. And I had swallowed this vile compound out of pure bravado, or rather from a cowardly fear of the taunts of a few disreputable loafers! I blush now when I think of it.

When morning came I got up, though not without considerable difficulty, for I felt very weak, and my head still ached frightfully; but I plunged my head into ice-cold water again and again, and this relieved the pain in a measure. So after my bath, I went downstairs feeling better mentally as well as physically.

My hostess was already moving about in the dingy room below, which was still full of tobacco smoke, while the men sleeping around the stove presented a repulsive spectacle of intoxication and brutishness.

"Well, little father, may I offer you a drop of *kvass* this morning?" asked the old hag, with a smile that disclosed her toothless gums in a most ghastly way.

Though I blushed a little at the allusion, I responded in my most dignified manner,—



"I want nothing, thank you. Will you have the goodness to make out my bill? I intend to leave at noon."

And without stopping to listen to her eager protests, I hastened to the Gymnasium.

The clock was striking eight when I reached the door, where I found Serge Kratkine waiting for me.

"I thought you were not coming," he remarked. "They are great sticklers for punctuality here. A student who is tardy three times in one term is expelled. I advise you to come early. It is the only way one can be sure of being on time."

"Yes, it is very hard to be exactly on time, — neither too early nor too late," I replied.

"And for that very reason, instead of saying to myself, 'Recitations begin at eight o'clock,' I say, 'Recitations begin at ten minutes of eight;' and in that way I always manage to be on hand."

I could see the importance of my new friend's warning, for the doorkeeper was already at his post, impatiently jingling his keys. I soon learned that he showed tardy students no mercy; it was even said that he did not hesitate to set the hands of the college clock a few minutes ahead in order that he might have the pleasure of shutting the door in the faces of unfortunate youths who deluded themselves with the idea that they had plenty of time, and consequently failed to put in an appearance until the very last minute.

I learned, too, that Gavruchka — for that was the janitor's name — had a very irritable disposition, and that there had been open war between him and the boys from time immemorial. The small children of the neighborhood regarded him as a positive ogre, and the older

gamins were continually playing jokes on him, — thus keeping him in a furious passion. One of their favorite tricks consisted in ringing his bell, and then hiding; and when the janitor came out and saw no one, he invariably re-entered the lodge in a towering rage, to the intense delight of the culprits. They wrote, too, all sorts of insulting epithets on the wall, such as, "Gavruchka, the mad man; Gavruchka, the old tippler; Gavruchka, the old beer barrel," etc.; and one day they even went so far as to tie a live cat to the bell-knob.

Consequently, he held all boys, great and small, in holy horror; and nothing pleased him better than to detect one of them in a fault. He was a tall and exceedingly corpulent man, with a surly face of a suspiciously florid hue. He had served in the Crimean war, and it was currently reported, that he had gobbled up a Frenchman and an Englishman at a single mouthful at Sebastopol, and that it was their brass buttons that had spoiled his digestion, and at the same time soured his disposition.

We entered the class-room, where all the pupils deposited their books on their desks while awaiting the entrance of the professor. Most of the students were talking together in subdued tones. There was no surveillance of any kind.

"Why was I given a seat in the front row near you, yesterday?" I inquired of Serge. "I should think a new pupil would be placed at the foot of the class, and be compelled to make his way up."

"Oh, good students are not distinguished from poor students by the places they occupy in the class-room. I have a seat in the front row merely because I am near-sighted, and cannot see the blackboard and maps any-

where else. All who have seats in this row are troubled in the same way that I am. Directly behind us sit the students whose vision is less defective, while the far-sighted pupils have seats at the other end of the room."

"But I am not near-sighted, so why was I placed here?"

"Because your eyes have not been examined yet. The doctor makes his tour of inspection every Monday. You will be called up; he will satisfy himself in regard to the acuteness of your vision; the result will be recorded in a register, and a corresponding seat will be assigned you."

Every sound suddenly ceased; you could have heard a pin drop in the room. The professor had just entered.

"M. Golovetchov, our instructor in Latin," whispered Serge.

M. Golovetchov was a slender man of medium height, with thin, gray locks and side whiskers. He was about fifty years of age, and though he impressed me at first as being very austere both in appearance and manner, his steel-gray eyes kindled when he talked, and at times assumed a really genial expression. He was severe, but universally respected.

The Latin class took up the first half of the morning. The recitation of one of Virgil's Eclogues was first given, and occasionally the professor interrupted the pupil and repeated a few lines in his stead. It was a pleasure to listen to his melodious voice and graceful rendering of the lines. It was evident that he derived a keen artistic enjoyment from the well-rounded periods, and that it must have been torture to him to hear these beautiful verses murdered by a drawling, monotonous voice, or an incorrect rhythm. It must be admitted that he was often obliged to suffer in this way in the Third Class, however.

The recitation of the eclogue was followed by the translation of a page of Sallust. A pupil designated by the professor read a few lines aloud, then made a literal translation into Russian; another pupil remodelled this literal translation into a more elegant form; and finally a third student explained the grammatical construction and pointed out the idioms, M. Golovetchov all the while correcting and explaining in the most lucid and animated manner.

My father himself had taught me all the Latin and Greek I knew, and I took a genuine interest in the lesson, and was astonished at the swiftness with which the two hours devoted to this recitation passed.

As I was looking at the professor, he motioned me to approach his chair, asked me my name and age, and then told me to prepare the lesson assigned for the next day, — a translation of a passage from Lucian and some verses of the Iliad to be learned by heart.

Then he withdrew, and we boys went out into the courtyard to enjoy our recess.

“Térentieff!” cried Serge, “I say, wait for me!”

On hearing this exclamation a youth in front of me turned, and began to stare at me in a most remarkable manner.

I returned the stare with interest, I presume, for I was greatly astonished.

He was a tolerably good-looking, light complexioned fellow, about my own size, but he had a rather consequential, conceited air. At last, tired of being stared at, I put on my cap, and plunging my hands in my pockets, said, with a rather forced smile, for I was considerably embarrassed, —

“You ’ll know me when you see me again, I hope.” He

made no reply, however, but turning his back on me, walked rapidly away.

“Did you bring any lunch?” inquired Serge, as he slipped his arm through mine.

“No; did you?”

“No, indeed; my father will not allow it. He thinks that eating too often dulls the mind and makes study very difficult.”

“It strikes me that this is a precept I shall be very likely to observe,” I said to myself. “What is going on down there?” I added aloud, pointing to the farther end of the courtyard, where quite a crowd of students had already assembled.

“Ah, they are going to skate. What a pity I forgot my skates this morning! Have n’t you yours?”

“No, I did n’t bring them.”

“Oh, well, let us go and look on.”

When we joined the others we found that most of the boys had their skates on, and were already skimming swiftly over the sheet of ice at the end of the playground. I saw, too, that this was not a pond, as I at first supposed, but a perfectly level grass-plot covered with a thick coating of ice.

“It’s a splendid skating-rink,” explained Serge, “though I’m not sure you ever saw one like it before. As soon as the first cold weather comes, we flood the plot a little every day, — of course the grass is cut short first, — and the ice soon becomes so thick that it lasts far into the spring, and long after the ice on the ponds has melted. The only trouble is that we can enjoy it only a half hour a day, for we have but one recess.”

“How about the afternoon?”



"Oh, the afternoon session is only two hours long, with but five minutes intermission, so there is no time for skating; besides, we have afternoon class but four times a week. We have no afternoon session Wednesdays and Saturdays."

We had been watching the skaters but a few minutes when a shower of snowballs struck me on the head and back, and turning quickly, I saw a crowd of Third Class boys half concealed behind a snow-bank, from which they were manufacturing their ammunition.

"Help, Serge, help!" I cried delighted, for I was an adept in this sport. Indeed, it was almost the only game I had ever enjoyed playing with the children of our village. Serge, Grichine, and I, together with a few others, soon gathered a big pile of snow, and returned the enemy's fire with a well directed cannonade.

We soon gained a partial victory over our assailants, and were about rushing forward to carry the fortress by assault, when the bell rang, and we raced back to the college pell-mell, warmed and enlivened by this stirring sport. All my timidity had vanished so far as my fellow pupils were concerned, and it seemed to me I had been a student of Saint-Vladimir College all my life.

The boy who had stared at me in such an insolent manner, and whom I had heard addressed as Strodttmann, had been at the head of the attacking party in our snow-ball fight; but I was a little surprised when he jostled me rather roughly in the corridor on our return, and I fancied I overheard some muttered remarks about "Stepneaks"<sup>1</sup> and "peasants who force themselves in among city people." I was by no means sure that these remarks were

<sup>1</sup> A dweller upon the steppes, synonymous with peasant or rustic.

intended for me, however; and not being at all sensitive, my return to the class-room was attended with no incident of importance.

It was Saturday, so we were free for the rest of the day when the morning recitations were over; and after bidding Serge good-by, I hastened back to The White Bear, resolved to devote the afternoon to a search for other lodgings.

I went straight up to my garret, packed my things, and came downstairs with my valise in my hand.

"Is my bill ready?" I inquired of my hostess, who sat by the stove knitting, with a rather surly expression on her face.

"Of course. Did n't you ask me for it?"

"Then give it to me, if you please."

The old woman handed me a dirty scrap of paper. "Here it is," she remarked,— "four roubles, five kopecks; and I call upon all the saints to witness that it is cheap, dirt cheap, for such a nice room,—and a young man that I waited on like my own son —"

I interrupted her with an exclamation of wrath and dismay. Four roubles, five kopecks! It was a clear case of robbery! Why, it would take nearly all the money I possessed in the world to pay it!

But the old woman began to cry out as if some one was abusing her.

"Room, half a rouble," she whined; "dinner only half a rouble,—a dinner for a prince, too! —brandy for eight persons,—upon my word as an honest woman, I charge less for the brandy than it cost me,—two and a half roubles; and the broken plates,—plates that belonged to my poor dead father, the only relic I had left of that

sainted man, — one rouble, five kopecks; and not a single kopeck for all the trouble you have given me, — nothing for taking up all that water, that nice, fresh water to your room! No nobleman in his palace could have been better served. If you want to cheat a poor widow you can, but may the curse of heaven fall upon you!" etc.

There seemed to be no way to escape from the horrible old creature but to pay her. I did so, and left the inn with an almost empty purse, and far from pleased with the results of my first day of independence. Then I began to wander about the city in search of a shelter, intending at the same time to try and find some work by which I could support myself. I roamed about a long time without success, however, for my experience at the White Bear made me shrink from the thought of entering another den of that kind, and all the lodgings I liked were too expensive for me. While searching for lodgings, I also kept a sharp look-out for places where I thought they might need an honest, industrious boy. Thus, I tried in turn a bookseller who needed a copyist, a harness-maker who had advertised for an apprentice, and a fire-engine station where the services of a boy willing to make himself generally useful were desired; but some wanted references, others thought me too young, or the position was already filled.

When night came, I was no better off than when I began. I was tired and disheartened, and as I dragged myself wearily along, laden with my valise, which seemed intolerably heavy now, I asked myself despondently what was going to become of me.

Meanwhile, my peregrinations had brought me back to the same railway where I left the train on my arrival in the city, and an almost homelike feeling stole over me at the



DMITRI IN PERPLEXITY ABOUT HIS NIGHT'S LODGING.





thought that this iron track which dwindled away to a mere thread in the distance led to Sitovka. Almost unconsciously, I entered the depot, and taking advantage of the fact that I had my valise with me, I did what any person who was waiting for a train was at liberty to do, — that is, selected a bench and stretched myself out upon it, using my valise as a pillow. In a few moments I had fallen into a deep sleep, from which I did not wake until the next morning. No one had troubled himself in the least about my presence. A good-natured looking porter was opening the baggage-room when I woke, and I ventured to ask him to take charge of my valise until evening. He consented; and after I had taken out my skates and thanked him for his kindness, I left the station just as the sun made its appearance above the eastern horizon.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A FAMOUS MUSICIAN.

I WALKED briskly toward the city with my head well up in the air, and a few kopecks still jingling in my pocket. My breakfast consisted of a big piece of rye bread; and while eating it, I seated myself on a bench in one of the public squares to review the situation. As I was sitting there Strodtmann passed. I recognized him instantly. He was quite gorgeously attired in a pair of wide black velvet trousers, and his broadcloth pelisse was trimmed with costly fur. He gave me a contemptuous glance, and I felt the hot blood rush to my face. The thought occurred to me that I might be disgracing my uniform — or rather the famous cap of the institution — by munching black bread in a public place, and if I had yielded to my first impulse, I should have stepped up to my fellow pupil and expressed my willingness to explain then and there if he wished it; but either he did not perceive my intention, or he was resolved not to give me the desired opportunity, for after having surveyed me from head to foot with a supercilious air, he continued on his way, whistling in a manner that seemed positively insulting to me. Although I was generally not at all prone to take offence, Strodtmann's behavior greatly disconcerted me; and as soon as he disappeared from sight around the next corner, I took a very dejected survey of myself. My toilet, made at the pump in the courtyard of the railway

station, had been of the most primitive kind, and my clothes needed brushing sadly; but though this was very annoying, how could I help it? I could certainly submit to this trifling inconvenience after so many greater trials.

The morning was magnificent, and as it was Sunday, the bells of the fifteen hundred churches of Moscow were filling the clear, crisp air with a flood of melody. The trees were thickly hung with icicles, to which the bright sunlight imparted all the brilliant hues of the rainbow. The ground was covered with a thick coating of snow and ice, and I saw a number of children gliding swiftly along on skates instead of walking like the staid and respectable citizens.

I had noticed the same thing the evening before, and this had caused me to take my own skates out of my valise before leaving the depot; and as soon as I had finished my breakfast, I put them on and resumed my tour of inspection.

The streets were very quiet, and the people I met wore that thoughtful, rather austere expression usual with us on Sunday. I met entire families on their way to church, the ladies and children warmly dressed in fur-lined pelisses, and followed by tall footmen carrying their prayer-books.

As I knew nothing about the city, I thought I would go to the Kremlin, and take another look at it; so I started off, gliding swiftly and smoothly through the peaceful streets. Oh, what good exercise skating is! I was soon warm, almost too warm in fact, and my situation seemed much less gloomy to me by the time I reached the Krasnoï Plocshad, or Red Square.

A church loomed up before me, a strange, fantastic edifice, covered with towers and domes, all of different shapes

and sizes and colors; one, painted to represent a green net-work over a yellow ground, another red, with broad white stripes, another blue and yellow, and still another gilded. From a belfry in one of the towers, the bells were ringing joyously.

“Oh, yes, this must be the church Serge Arcadiévitch was telling me about,” I said to myself. “I think I’ll go in and take a look at it.”

The massive doors stood open. The worshippers were in their places, and the rich tones of the great organ already filled the nave. I stepped in, but paused almost instantly, overcome with admiration, for never before had I heard any music to be compared with this. First came a rich burst of majestic melody that died away in a sigh softer than the murmur of the summer breeze; then a pure, ethereal note, softer and more mellow than any human voice, took up the refrain again, which ended, as it had begun, in another glorious and inspiring burst of melody.

Never had I dreamed of anything like this. I turned hot and cold by turns as I listened to the magical strains with breathless eagerness, and when they died away, I found that my eyes were full of tears.

I stole softly down to the other end of the church; and seeing a little winding staircase before me, I mounted it and found myself standing in front of the organ.

A venerable man dressed in black was seated at the instrument, his long white hair hanging in wild disorder about his austere face. He played without even glancing at the music in front of him; for though his fingers moved over the keyboard with marvellous celerity and precision, his sparkling eyes were fixed on vacancy.

About thirty lads from ten to sixteen years of age were grouped behind him. Among them I perceived one of my classmates — that same Grichine Yégov, of whom Kratkine had spoken. I ventured to approach him, for he was standing a little behind the others.

“Who is that?” I asked eagerly, pointing to the organist.

“Why, that is Master Népomuk Raabzinsky, the great Hungarian composer,” replied Grichine. “Did you never hear of him?”

“No.”

“Well, you can boast of being the only person in Moscow that has not. Everybody comes to St. Basil’s on Sunday to hear him play, — even the czar has been here, for Népomuk Raabzinsky won’t put himself out for any one, and plays nowhere but here. For more than thirty years he has never been heard anywhere else.”

An impressive chant interrupted us. The service had begun. The choristers drew nearer to the great musician, and suddenly began to sing one of the most triumphant and inspiring canticles of our liturgy; and their pure, sweet voices, supported by the rich, full tones of the organ, were wonderfully effective, as the waves of melody rose and fell through the arches of the ancient edifice.

I was familiar with this canticle from having often sung it at Sitovka with my poor Agathon Illarionovitch.

When they began the second verse, I could not resist the desire to unite my voice with those of the choristers. I sang at first almost under my breath; then seeing that the sopranos seemed weak, I aided them with the whole power of my voice, thus carrying the air alone, as it were.

Népomuk Raabzinsky turned and fixed a stern eye upon



me, without ceasing to play; but instead of being intimidated by his glance, I fancied I read a sort of encouragement in it, and intoxicated by the beauty of the music, I yielded to the spell, and sang on to the end with my whole heart and soul.

As the inspiring strains died away in one rich, long sustained, vibrating chord, the *maestro* rose, or rather bounded from his seat, and came toward me. I fancied he was going to pitch me headlong downstairs to punish me for my intrusion. In fact, I felt almost certain that was to be my fate as I saw him push through the crowd of choristers. On reaching me, he seized me in an iron grasp that would have crushed shoulders less sturdy than mine, dragged me up to the organ, and placing me on his right, said imperiously, —

“Stand there! Don’t you dare to move!”

I took good care not to disobey him; but when the choir began an anthem, I dared not open my lips.

“Sing, you egregious idiot!” growled *Népomuk*, savagely.

I joined in the chorus, and somehow fancying I again read approval and encouragement in the conductor’s eyes, I took it into my head to display my modest talents for his benefit; so ever and anon I amused myself by changing from one part to another, singing now alto, and now soprano, and embellishing the air with the trills and runs in which my soul delighted, exactly as I had been wont to do in *Sitovka*.

The anthem ended; the *maestro*, who had not uttered a word, began to play a wild, sweet melody that thrilled me with rapturous delight; I listened breathlessly, and when the last note died away, I could not repress a deep sigh.

He leaned toward me.

“Do you know the Invocation solo in G-flat?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Sing it, then; and mind you, no nonsense this time.”

My heart throbbed almost to bursting; but when the choir finished the prelude, I began the solo. The solemn, majestic strains wafted me upwards as if upon wings; my embarrassment was forgotten. I gave full vent to my voice, and was filled with wonder myself as I heard it ring out pure and rich, filling the immense structure even to the vaulted roof.

The service ended; the old musician beckoned me to him.

“Why don’t you come and sing here every Sunday?” he asked curtly.

“I am a stranger in Moscow. I have but just arrived in the city.”

“Very well, henceforth you are a member of this choir. Do you understand that? If you are poor, and you look as if you were, I’ll give you four roubles a month. Do you hear, boys? This lad is engaged as first soprano.”

I tried to thank him.

“That will do! that will do,” interrupted the maëstro. “See that you are on time. Punctuality is indispensable. Look here, you had better come and see me this evening. We can talk the matter over.”

Without another word, he walked away.

“Wonders of wonders!” ejaculated Grichine, who had joined me. “What a success!”

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“Why, never within the memory of man has the great Népomuk Raabzinsky been so complimentary. We have

never before heard from his lips any epithets save 'egregious idiot' and 'consummate ass'! And he wants to have a talk with you. It is truly marvellous!"

I left the church in company with Grichine. Seven or eight choristers were standing in the doorway as we passed out. They all stopped talking on seeing us.

"Savine does n't look very well pleased," remarked Grichine, laughing.

"Who is Savine?"

"That dark-complexioned fellow who was holding forth in the middle of the group. He has been our first soprano. Of course it is not very flattering to him to find himself ousted by you."

The lad referred to surveyed me contemptuously, then turning away, with a shrug of the shoulders, remarked loud enough for me to hear,—

"Bah! the maëstro has lost his senses! He'll get over it, though. These violent fancies of his never last long!"

He walked away. I noticed he too wore the red cap of a Third Class student.

"Does he go to our school?" I inquired of Grichine.

"Savine Podnier? Oh, yes; he belongs to our school and to our class. You'll know him by and by."

"Are there any other of our schoolmates in the choir?"

"No, only we three. I come here, you know, merely to earn a little money, and the rich students think it quite beneath their dignity to do such a thing. Savine, however, sang for the sake of the glory, he being first soprano; but now you've taken his place, I doubt if he comes any more."

I had quite a pleasant chat with Grichine, who seems to be a very nice fellow. He told me a good deal about him-

self. It seems he has lost his father, and his mother is very poor, and they find it difficult to get along. He told me, too, that it was the height of his ambition to become a doctor. I, in turn, gave him a brief history of my own life, and he made me promise that I would come and dine with him some day at the Pension Goltchov, that Serge pointed out to me.

We parted very good friends, and I continued my walk, greatly relieved to know that my immediate wants were thus provided for. In the evening, I went to call on the *maestro*, as I had been ordered to do. Grichine gave me the address.

Népomuk Raabzinsky lives in a dingy old house in a gloomy street. He opened the door himself when I rapped, and ushered me into his own private apartment. The wildest confusion reigned there. The chairs and tables, and even the floor, were piled high with music and musical instruments, all mixed pell mell with boots and shoes, clothing and cooking utensils.

He had evidently been engaged in playing the violin when I entered, and he resumed the interrupted melody without appearing to pay the slightest attention to me. It was an unspeakably sad and weird composition. The violin wailed and sobbed like some human soul in mortal anguish; there were strange discords, sudden transitions, abrupt changes of key; then snatches of savage mirth, which, together with the dimly lighted room and the furrowed, care-worn face of the musician, produced an indescribable effect upon me.

I wept in spite of myself, — my grief, my loneliness, my gloomy future, seemed to be so faithfully depicted in this melody; then, without pausing, the *maestro* glided into

a smooth, soft movement of marvellous sweetness and peacefulness.

"What do you think of it?" he asked, as the last note died away.

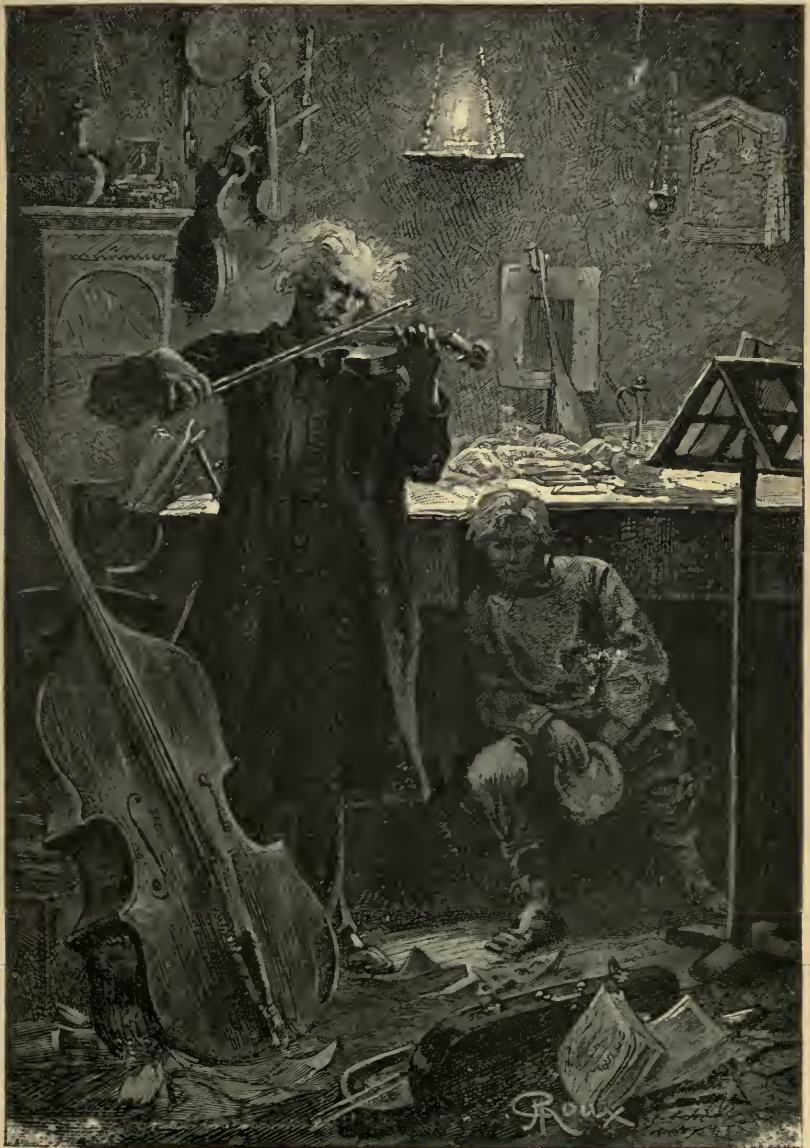
"You broke my heart at first, but afterwards you more than consoled me," I answered, wiping my eyes.

The old musician's smile was one of profound satisfaction.

"Well, it was Népomuk Raabzinsky who composed that melody," he replied. "People refused to acknowledge his talent when he was young, you know; they sneered at him and ridiculed him and made his hair turn white while he was still young. Now when old age has come, and the grave is clamoring for my bones, and I have only a few more miserable days to drag out in a foreign land, they would gladly recall and applaud me. What do I care for their praise now? I am too proud! I scorn their stupid flattery, and they shall never hear the melodies that ran riot in my brain when I was in my prime, — never! They are all here," he added, striking his clenched fist on the table before him, — a table piled with sheets of music; "and when death comes, when my last hour is near, I, Népomuk Raabzinsky, will thrust all this into the flames with my own hand, and my works will perish with me, and by me."

His gestures revealed a savage exultation. I believed him mad then; afterwards I learned that his peculiarities and his misanthropy were alike due to great suffering. For a long, long time he had been pitilessly ridiculed and misunderstood; then he left his ungrateful country, and came to Moscow, where he led a life of absolute seclusion for years, going only to church, where he gave his services gratuitously.





DMITRI IN THE OLD MUSICIAN'S ROOM.



When he became a little calmer, he questioned me about myself; and I tried to tell him how grateful I was to him for having taken me as a pupil.

“Bah! You will do like all the rest of them,” he exclaimed bitterly. “I shall develop your musical talents, and form you, as it were; then, when you become famous, — for you are gifted enough to become so, if you will, — you’ll forget all your teacher has done for you; you’ll even cease to remember that you were ever a pupil of that old musical fanatic Raabzinsky.”

I protested in vain.

“Silence! I tell you you’ll do like all the others!” cried the old maëstro. “I’ve known only too long what one may expect to reap here below, — nothing but ingratitude and black hypocrisy. Here, try this page.”

I glanced at the lines of music jotted down, haphazard, in characters as strongly marked and erratic as Népomuk Raabzinsky’s own traits of character; and feeling sure that it was a melody of his own composition, I did my best to render it correctly and with feeling.

“You sang it very badly,” he said sternly, when I had concluded. “Try again, and do it better this time.”

I strove to obey as I sang the composition again, and yet again. As I was about to begin for the fourth time, he interrupted me.

“Enough!” he said brusquely. “You have a good voice, and what is better, a good ear. You love music; I can see that. It is a great pity, though. You had much better like something else, — mending shoes or measuring calico, for instance. But what idiot was it that taught you to sing?”

“It was no idiot. It was the clergyman of our village,

and he has a very fine voice. If I have any talent for music, I owe it to him."

"Hum! You're faithful to your old friends, I see. How strange! Ah, well, you may go now. You can come back early to-morrow morning, and I'll show you what singing is. Where do you live?"

"I have n't any lodgings yet; I —"

The maëstro opened the door, and put his head out into the corridor.

"Here, — hallo there, you woman! Ouliana, I say! Ouliana!"

A hideous-looking old woman appeared in answer to this peremptory summons.

"Give this boy a room!" shouted the maëstro; "and don't make him pay too much for it, or you'll have to settle with me."

He re-entered his room, slamming the door violently behind him; and I followed the old woman up to the garret, where she showed me a tolerably clean little room, containing a narrow bed and a stool, which she said she would rent to me for a rouble a month. Having accepted her offer, I hastened back to the railway station for my valise. Then I returned and took possession of my little room, with which I was greatly pleased. With the addition of a shelf or two for my books, I thought my new quarters would be quite palatial. I soon fell asleep; but until morning the plaintive tones of the great composer's violin were mingled with my dreams.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BITER BITTEN.

ON Monday the physician connected with the Gymnasium paid us a visit, as Serge had predicted. He examined me, and seemed to be thoroughly convinced of the vigor of my constitution; he seated me, too, on the last row, among the far sighted pupils.

Besides being separated from Serge, I had the still greater annoyance of finding myself in close proximity to Capiton Strodtmann. Savine Podnier occupied a seat beside him, and when I took my place I received a hostile glance from both of them. I must admit that I returned it with interest. My neighbor on the right was Grichine Yégov. He was so thin and dark and short that he looked very like a monkey, and the strange contortions he made while writing increased the resemblance. He gradually got his head farther and farther over until it rested upon his right arm; and it was only by a vast amount of sniffing and snorting, and by poking his tongue far out of his mouth, that he managed to write his exercises,—which certainly ought to have been marvels, judging from the amount of time and labor he expended on them; but I soon discovered that, in spite of his apparent studiousness, Master Grichine was a very fun-loving fellow, and sure to have a hand in every piece of mischief.

On my left sat a handsome boy, who looked considerably younger than most of our fellow-students. He was



always very elegantly dressed, and usually came escorted by his private tutor, — a pale, slender young man, — and followed by a page of about his own age, who carried his books. This young aristocrat's name was Platon Grégorov, and he belonged to one of the first families in Moscow; but he was a good-hearted, jolly fellow for all that, and Grichine's pranks were a never-failing source of amusement to him.

Immediately after the physician's departure lessons began. We had mathematics that morning; and I was soon reduced to a state bordering on despair by a problem the professor placed on the blackboard: —

“A hound is pursuing a hare which is 95 leaps in advance of him. The hound makes 6 leaps while the hare is making 8, and 4 leaps of the hound are equal to 7 of those made by the hare. How many leaps must the hound make in order to overtake the hare?”

“To be solved by arithmetic.”

“We have a new scholar, I see,” he remarked. “Dmitri Fédorovitch Térentieff, come to the board, and explain the solution of this problem.”

Alas! arithmetic has never been my forte. I went to the board most reluctantly, and soon had hares and hounds in a state of inextricable confusion. I stood before the blackboard, chalk in hand, now effacing a figure with a nervous hand, now making one, adding, subtracting, dividing the hares by the hounds, and the hounds by the hares, toiling and moiling, but making not one atom of progress.

“Hum!” said the professor, seeing my complete bewilderment; “this is not very promising. Yégov, come and show us how this problem should be solved.”

Grichine was at the blackboard before I had time to lay down the crayon.

“Go back to your seat, Térentieff.”

I returned to my place, overcome with confusion, only to be greeted with the sneers and smothered laughter of Strodtmann and his follower.

“How embarrassed the poor child is!” muttered Capiton.

“Lend him a fan; he looks warm.”

“No; don’t you see it is the blush of innocence that dyes his cheeks?”

And Capiton, seizing a pencil, hastily drew a rough caricature of me and my costume, — my long hair, sturdy limbs, and shabby blouse (there was a big patch on the back, at which I inwardly rebelled), — and after writing under it, “The new Pascal discovering the laws of mathematics,” he circulated his sketch among the boys.

This *chef-d’œuvre* was a great success. It was passed along under the benches, and everybody laughed immoderately. I did not like to appear incensed at a joke which might not have been intended to hurt my feelings; so I laughed with the others.

Meanwhile, Grichine had triumphantly solved all the difficulties which seemed so terrifying to me, and was now concluding the operation with an imposing flourish, announcing that the hound would have to make 228 leaps in order to overtake the hare.

“Very good,” said M. Pérékoff. “Strodtmann, you may now solve, by algebra, the following problem: —

“A father is asked his son’s age. ‘I was three times my son’s age twelve years ago,’ replied the father. ‘Now, I am only twice his age.’ What is the age of the father and of the son?”

All Strodtmann’s cheerfulness seemed to have deserted

him as he dragged himself to the blackboard. He effaced every mark with great care and deliberation; he sharpened his crayon; then he blew his nose; then he indulged in a fit of coughing.

“We are waiting, Strodtmann,” remarked the professor.

Then seeing the pupil still remain silent and motionless,

“How many unknown quantities have we in this problem?” he asked.

After a long silence, Capiton replied that there were two.

“Think a moment.”

“There must be two, Grégov Ivanovitch,” repeated Strodtmann, with an air of injured virtue. “The age of the father and of the son.”

“Is not the father’s age twice that of the son?”

“Yes, of course; I just said —”

“What, then? Answer, Kratkine, if you please.”

“It would only be necessary to find the age of one in order to discover the age of the other,” replied Serge, promptly.

“Evidently. Go on, Strodtmann.”

But Capiton continued to blunder so outrageously that the professor at last sent him back to his seat.

Serge was summoned in his stead, and explained each step with a calmness that the most refractory problem would be powerless to disturb,—at least so it seemed to me.

I learned in a few moments that if  $x$  represented the son’s age,  $2x$  would represent the father’s; hence, twelve years ago the son’s age was  $x - 12$ , and the father’s  $2x - 12$ . As the father was then three times the age of the son, we would have the following equation:—

$$\begin{aligned} 3(x - 12) &= 2x - 12 \\ 3x - 36 &= 2x - 12 \\ x &= 24 \end{aligned}$$

Consequently, the father was 48 years old and the son 24.

While I was gazing at my new friend's clever exposition, M. Pérékoff, turning to another pupil in the front row, said, —

“Ignato Stépanovitch Luvine, is there any other way of solving this problem?”

“Yes,” replied Luvine, promptly; “we might proceed with two unknown quantities. For example, let  $x$  represent the age of the father, and  $y$  that of the son. We should then have the following equations: —

$$\begin{aligned} x &= 2y \\ x - 12 &= (y - 12) 3 \end{aligned}$$

hence by substitution :

$$\begin{aligned} 2y - 12 &= 3y - 36 \\ -y &= -24 \text{ or } y = 24 \\ x &= 48 \end{aligned}$$

“Fudge! there's nothing very difficult about that,” muttered Strodtmann, who seemed to have recovered his spirits entirely. “I could have done it just as well as they did, if I had chosen to take the trouble.”

M. Pérékoff then gave us some explanations in algebra and geometry, and his clear and concise manner of speaking convinced me that the science of mathematics was really something very different from that which I had learned under Master Lebewohl's ferule. After he had assigned the lesson for the next day, the bell rang for recess.

"Let me tell you one thing," Serge said to me as we were on our way to the skating pond; "if I were in your place, I would have my hair cut."

"Why should I, when it seems to afford everybody so much amusement," I replied, laughing at the recollection of Capiton's caricature.

"Yes, that is all very well; but here everybody wears their hair short, so yours gives you a — a rather peculiar look."

"Why don't you say an idiotic look, and have done with it?" I retorted good-naturedly. "Well, many thanks for your advice; I'll follow it after school."

A big, brawny fellow like me, with long hair hanging down upon his shoulders after the fashion of the Middle Ages, and a tiny cap perched upon his luxuriant locks, must indeed have looked odd enough.

I had my hair cut that very day, and felt much more comfortable after the operation.

There was a French recitation that afternoon, and I had the pleasure of hearing my translation praised by M. Lapenelle. He called attention to some expressions he considered specially well rendered, and said I had managed the idioms much better than the majority of my classmates. He expressed himself as equally well satisfied with my theme, but added that he was surprised to notice in it certain affectations of speech that would lead one to suppose I had learned my French in the days of the *grand monarque*, Louis XIV., and asked me how it happened.

I replied rather timidly that I had learned French from my father, and that he himself had learned it from an old *émigré*, — an octogenarian, — which might account for my rather antiquated mode of expression. I answered in



French, as M. Lapenelle never allowed a word of Russian to be used in the class-room, except when it was absolutely necessary, — that is, when one was translating.

“ You have a good accent,” he remarked. “ Read this passage, if you please.”

He handed me a volume of Racine, and I read aloud the famous passage beginning, —

“ A peine nous sortions des portes de Trézène.”

How often I had heard Sacha repeat it to my father!

“ Very good, very good indeed!” said M. Lapenelle. “ You do credit to the teaching of my honored friend your father.”

I was deeply touched by these words of commendation. After this, M. Lapenelle asked us to give him our opinion in regard to this selection, and also upon Racine, his contemporaries, and French tragedy in general. Nearly all the members of the class took part in the discussion. I noticed that Serge had a rather heavy, though correct accent, and that he knew much more about the chronology of the authors and their works than any of our companions.

From the very beginning of the recitation, Capiton had pretended to be asleep, behind a book.

“ I am sorry to disturb such peaceful slumbers,” remarked M. Lapenelle, who had not failed to notice this inattention on the part of his pupil, “ but Monsieur Strodtmann will please arouse himself, and delight our ears by reading these verses.”

He referred to the scene between Pyrrhus and Andromache in Racine’s tragedy.

Capiton took the book; but he rendered the lines in such

a drawling, monotonous tone, and with such a strong German accent, that there was a general laugh, for all the other boys read French very well. Even M. Lapenelle could hardly repress a smile, and I laughed heartily. Capiton contented himself with casting furious glances around him and anathematizing this beastly French tongue, — taking good care that the professor did not hear him, however.

“Where did he get that accent?” I whispered to Grichine.

“It runs in the blood. His father is a German,” he answered, laughing. “He is a rich man, very rich,” he added. “He had charge of the property of a wealthy old bachelor for a number of years, and he feathered his nest well, I can tell you.”

I soon became thoroughly initiated into the rules and regulations of the institution. Before a week had elapsed, the feeling that I was a new comer had vanished, and I had ceased to stand in the slightest awe of my schoolmates or of my teachers. They were all, or nearly all, good fellows, — I am referring now, of course, to my fellow students, — and I soon became quite intimate with Kratkine, whose sensible, honest nature had won my respect from the very first. I soon became familiar, too, with the peculiarities of each professor. M. Golovetchov could not teach unless he was walking up and down the class-room with his hands clasped behind his back. His eyes were always fixed upon a certain window-pane; if he removed them, he was sure to lose the thread of his discourse. M. Pérékoff was quite a favorite in society. It was said that he dined out every evening, and that he was on intimate terms with all the officials. M. Lapenelle had never been able to accustom himself to our Russian

cookery, and "Nettle Soup," one of our favorite dishes, spoiled his appetite for a week. I discovered, too, that our learned superintendent was goodness itself, and that he was now engaged upon a fifteen-volume work on the Rings of Saturn,—a work that was destined to put to shame the achievements of all other astronomers, past, present, and future. M. Sarévine had the reputation of being severe, but conscientious and just. In fact, all the students, except a few chronic grumblers, spoke of our instructors with affection and respect.

I also learned that the dread tyrant Gavručka was rather too fond of the bottle, and that undue indulgence in stimulants caused him to behold terrible visions that frightened him nearly out of his wits.

This reminds me of an incident that occurred shortly after I entered the school, and that enlightened me very considerably in regard to Capiton Strodtmann's real character. One cold winter's morning as we left the schoolroom, half frozen, we all, as with one accord, hastened to the little tool-house on the edge of the pond, where we kept our skates and sleds. It was a tiny structure, built of rough boards, and but dimly lighted by one small window. As Grichine, who was leading the way, turned the key in the lock, a lugubrious moan was heard; and as the door opened, we boys, who were following closely upon Grichine's heels, could hardly believe our eyes.

A boy was standing in the farthest corner of the little hut, with his hands pressed tightly over his eyes, as if to shut out some hideous sight. A big hook in the wall had caught in the back of his blouse, a little below the collar, and he was standing perfectly motionless, as if

paralyzed. Indeed, it seemed to us in the dim light that it must be a dead body hanging there.

“Well!” exclaimed Grichine, gazing at the startling sight in open-mouthed wonder.

As Grichine spoke, a slight movement was perceptible in the apparently lifeless form; the hands fell from the face, and to our intense astonishment, we recognized Capiton Strodtmann,—but good heavens! in such a plight! His hair was wildly disordered, his features were distorted with fear, and traces of tears were plainly visible on his cheeks.

“Strodtmann!” we all shouted in the same breath, “what on earth are you doing here? And what are you crying about, you big booby? Who locked you up in here? We just got the key from Gavručka.”

These questions and a hundred others burst from the lips of the assembled crowd.

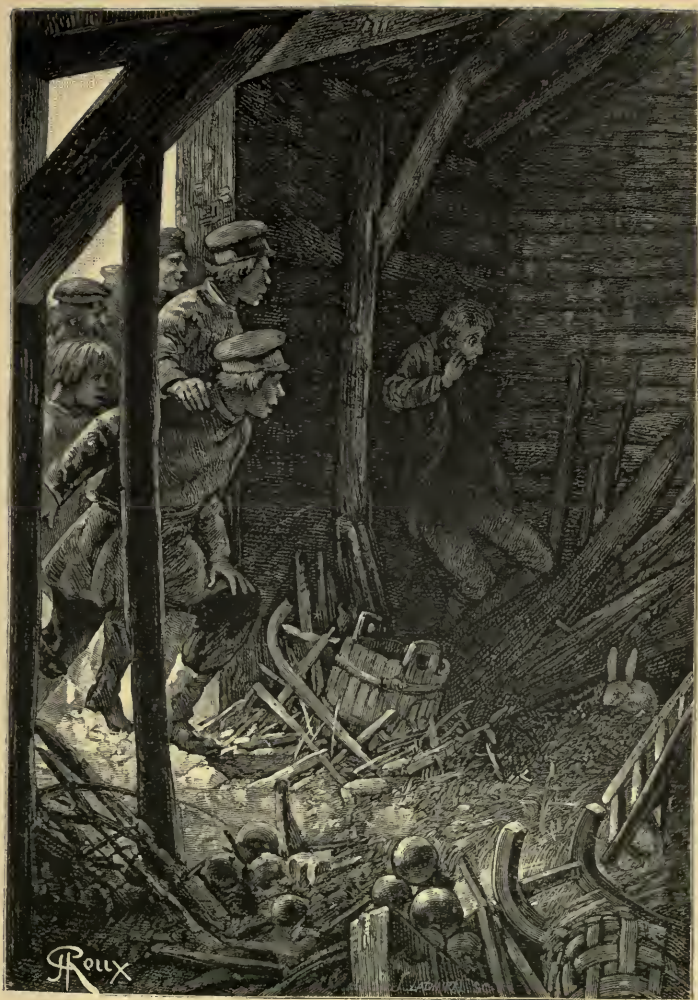
Capiton made no reply, but stood there pale and trembling, gazing at us the while, with an intensely bewildered air.

A stentorian voice, pealing out like thunder just behind us, made us start violently.

“Ah, ha, Strodtmann, so it is you who amuse yourself by frightening honest people at night! It is you who hide behind the wall in order to pounce out upon them and scare them half to death! So it is you, is it? But you’ve had a chance to see how it is yourself now. Did you have a pleasant night of it, shut up here, my fine gentleman?”

These words came from the lips of Gavručka, whose face was crimson with anger, and whose eyes seemed to be starting from their sockets. Strodtmann, still suspended in mid air, tried hard to compose himself and respond to





STRODTMANN'S EXPERIENCE IN THE TOOL-HOUSE.





the janitor's taunts with a contemptuous glance; but suddenly he uttered a piercing shriek, and made such a violent spring forward that his blouse gave way, and he fell full length upon the ground. Simultaneously, a pretty white rabbit with pink eyes, long ears, and silky fur bounded past Strodtmann's recumbent form, and seating itself in the corner began tranquilly to stroke its face with its forepaws.

"What the deuce is the matter with you?" cried Serge, raising our fellow student rather roughly from the ground. "What has happened?"

"I felt it again just now on my foot," faltered Strodtmann. "It is the same cold thing that touched my face last night. It held me against the wall — with an icy hand."

"Hand!" cried Grichine, contemptuously. "This is too rich, upon my word! It was the hook that held you, you booby! You must have gone and hung yourself on it. It would certainly never have come after you."

"And here is your ghost!" cried Platon, darting after the rabbit, which took refuge behind a pile of snowshoes and bats. After a brief struggle, Grégorov re-appeared, dusty and breathless, holding the innocent little quadruped by the ears.

Shouts of laughter greeted the sight. Strodtmann, having partially recovered from his fright, tried to speak with some of his wonted assurance of manner.

"You idiots!" he exclaimed, endeavoring to steady his voice. "I'd like to see you spend a night alone in this confounded hole, — in a place more lonely than — than the desert of Sahara!"

"Yes, yes," cried Gavruchka, who seemed to quite gloat

over the tortures the poor fellow must have endured; "I've told you all, more than once, that this place is haunted. Last night, when I approached this hut while quietly going my rounds, I heard a sepulchral voice cry out, 'Gavruchka, your end is near! Prepare to die, Gavruchka, Gavruchka!' I was frightened at first, — anybody would have been. And then I saw this young gentleman's shadow in the moonlight, and knew it was one of you accursed boys trying to scare me. It did n't take me long to grab him by the nape of the neck, push him into the tool-house, and turn the key on him. And if my poor little rabbit frightened the rascal, it must be because he had a guilty conscience; but for that, he certainly would n't have been almost scared to death by a bit of a creature like this."

As he spoke, Gavruchka put his rabbit under his arm, and went back to his room.

How we laughed! Strodtmann, still angry and agitated, ran to the superintendent to declare he was ill; and as his appearance certainly seemed to corroborate the assertion, he was seen no more that day. Gavruchka, satisfied, doubtless, with his revenge, did not mark him absent, so the affair never came to the knowledge of our teachers. Grichine often ran a great risk of condign punishment, however, by feigning the most abject terror whenever he met Strodtmann. He made his teeth chatter so violently that one would have supposed they were about to drop out of his head; and I think if he had not been of so much assistance to Capiton (he writes all his exercises for him, and does not scruple to accept a certain amount per week for the work), he would have received a good thrashing, Strodtmann being much the larger and stronger of the

two. But that young gentleman can control his temper when expediency requires it; so he bore Grichine's jokes very patiently, though I often wondered how such a big, brawny fellow could allow himself to be thus ridiculed without a word of protest.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MY VOCATION REVEALS ITSELF AT LAST.

MY immediate needs being thus provided for (though in a very humble way), there was nothing to cause me much anxiety except matters connected with my school life. Foremost among these was a fear that I might not be able to maintain my place in the first division of my class. I should have felt terribly humiliated if I had been obliged to go back into the second section. It cost me a great effort to keep up with my class, however. I was not only lamentably deficient in many of my studies, but my present life of close confinement and assiduous study was unspeakably irksome to me. While seated at my desk, I often thought of the vast, lonely plain extending on and on until it was merged into the gray sky above it. At such times my brain reeled, and a wild longing for liberty and fresh air took possession of me. The present was forgotten; I even listened with bated breath, hoping to catch the sounds so familiar to me in days gone by. Again I heard the wind sighing through the lofty trees, and saw fantastically shaped clouds chasing one another swiftly across the sky; once more I inhaled the sweet, fresh odors of the country air; and when my teacher's voice awakened me from this delightful dream, it was with a strange sinking of heart that I returned to the grim reali-



ties of life. Sometimes I could hardly believe that I was the Dmitri of former days, — everything around me was so different; I was surrounded by strange faces; all my former friends and acquaintances were far away, and this great city — how grim and oppressive it seemed in comparison with my native village! The very air seemed oppressive; I fancied that it had been frightfully tainted by the thousands of lungs that had inhaled it before I did, and absurd as the idea was, it caused me positive suffering. Weird, unfamiliar melodies continued to haunt my brain as in the olden time, but they were so sad now that they often brought tears to my eyes.

My only consolation was my long rambles through the surrounding country on half holidays; but even there the air seemed close and insipid in comparison with that of my birthplace.

I had not become intimate with any of my schoolmates except Serge; and though he had often invited me to his house, I had always refused to go. As for Strodtmann, my relations with him remained unchanged. The aversion I had felt toward him from the very first increased rather than diminished, and we rarely spoke except to interchange those slighting remarks which are sure to end in an open rupture sooner or later.

When he had occasion to speak of me, he always styled me "The Peasant," or "The Ragged Duke," — a delicate allusion to my extremely limited wardrobe. Capiton, who was always fashionably and expensively dressed, pretended to consider it a crime for a person to wear a shabby garment; but chancing to be near him on several occasions, I could see that his stiffly starched collar encircled a neck of doubtful cleanliness, and that his ears were not above sus-

pcion. In short, it was very evident that soap and water did not occupy a prominent place on his toilet-table; and though his hair was always well pomaded, his long, pointed finger-nails were generally dirty, and his hands rarely clean.

I noticed, too, that Strodtmann, though he boasted a good deal of his strength, was not inclined to select opponents of his own size either in his sports, or in the real or pretended fights so common among schoolboys. I myself would have been very glad to settle the unpleasantness between us once for all; but Capiton turned a deaf ear to all my invitations, so the state of affairs remained unchanged, though a firm conviction that my boastful fellow-student was a coward finally took possession of my mind.

I found plenty to occupy me at home, independent of my studies. Early every morning Népomuk Raabzinsky climbed to my little attic-room, and pulled me out of bed.

"Get up, lazybones, and take your lesson," was the exclamation that aroused me at daybreak every morning.

He hardly gave me time to dress, and explained the principles of music to me until school-time with intense earnestness and enthusiasm. It was evident that music was the one thing in the world worth living for in his opinion, and he saw the principles of harmony in each one of the different laws that govern the universe.

I was gradually learning to understand some of the secrets of musical composition. He made the works of all the great composers an open book to me; he familiarized me with their methods; he taught me to appreciate Mozart's wonderful orchestration, — how cleverly he made use of each different instrument, how delicately he brought

out the peculiar merits of each. Through him I came to love the modern composers as well as the composers of former times; and how often, while studying the compositions of Berlioz, Wagner, and Massenet, I felt that I was transported into another world!

Sometimes, when I had not annoyed my instructor too much by my stupidity, he would take up his violin, or seat himself at the piano, and charm my ears with some divine melody. He knew that I was an appreciative listener, and he played on and on for this humble boy as no one ever played before.

Such treats were rare, however, though I did my best to please him; but too often I incensed him by my dulness. At such times, he rapped my fingers pitilessly with his bow; and I should probably have rebelled but for the mingled reverence and pity which this highly gifted but unfortunate man had inspired in my heart. Quite often, too, I had to listen to furious tirades against human ingratitude, when I failed instantly to understand explanations which were given with a violence that rendered their meaning all the more obscure; but I loved him in spite of his peculiarities, for he possessed a nobility of character and a sincerity that could not fail to impress one. As for him, I believe he entertained a profound affection for me, though he never gave any outward manifestation of it.

Our singing lessons were gradually transformed into lessons in harmony.

"I have no intention of making you a coxcomb who will strut about the stage merely to show himself," he growled one day.

"I have no desire to be," I replied curtly. "I intend to be a composer, like yourself."

The maëstro had copied with his own hand, and hung in my room, a number of Schumann's precepts, which he required me to recite to him every morning.

"The education of the ear is the main thing. Compel yourself from the very first to distinguish the major and minor keys and each different note. The bell, the tap upon the window-pane, the clock, — try to observe the sounds they give.

"There are people who imagine they can accomplish anything if their fingers are supple and dexterous, and who devote several hours a day all their lives to mechanical exercises. This is the same thing as if a man forced himself to repeat the letters of the alphabet more and more rapidly every day. Employ your time more profitably.

"As regards time, the playing of many musicians reminds one of the gait of a drunken man. Guard against taking such performers as models.

"Always play as if a master were listening to you.

"Never play a piece without having read it over carefully beforehand.

"Never play poor music. Never even listen to it unless compelled to do so.

"You must not only have your piece at your fingers'-ends, but be able to hum it without the instrument.

"Never play the light, ephemeral music of the day. Time is too precious. A man would have to live a hundred lives to master only that which is good.

"Consider it a heinous offence to change, omit anything in, or introduce any new ornamentation into, the music of good composers. It is the worst outrage you can commit against art.

"Choose for your associates persons who know more than you do."

Though he paid very little attention to such matters

(he himself lived as frugally as a hermit in the desert), he must have noticed that I was growing thinner as I grew taller; for after my room-rent was paid, my pittance of three roubles a month barely sufficed to keep body and soul together.

“I have found you some work,” he said to me one day. “You boys think of nothing but eating and drinking. Go to Naboth, the son of Isaac, on the Slavianski Percoulak. He is the biggest thief in Moscow, but he will give you something to satisfy your gluttony.”

I did not thank him, for he had a horror of anything that resembled a compliment; but after school I hastened to the Slavianski Percoulak, — a dark, narrow street not very far from my lodgings.

Naboth, the son of Isaac, proved to be a little, old, jaundiced, crooked man, who wanted me to copy some music for him at the rate of a kopeck a page. The compensation was so small that I protested; and after a good deal of parleying, Naboth finally consented to furnish the paper. I then learned that he expected me to cover both sides of the page for the munificent sum of one kopeck. I spoke my mind, however, to such good purpose, that he at last agreed to pay me a kopeck for the upper as well as the lower side of the sheet. By working like a galley-slave, I succeeded in earning a grievenik or two a week; but even that was not to be despised that hard winter.

I copied the different parts for the orchestra of one of the leading theatres, and the work soon began to interest me very much.

“An opera must be beautiful,” I remarked one evening.

“Have you never been to the theatre?” asked the maëstro.



“No.”

“Well, here is a ticket for this evening’s performance; but don’t tell me anything about the fools you will hear there. You will see a set of squalling women and idiotic tenors raising themselves on the tips of their toes in order to screech the louder. You’ll think all this delightful, though, so clear out!”

I needed no urging. In a few moments I was seated in the theatre. The opera to be given that evening was Gounod’s “Faust.”

When the first strains of the enchanting overture resounded through the hall, I sat as if petrified. Never had my imagination in its wildest flights conceived of anything like this. Tears sprang to my eyes; I could see only as through a mist. The many instruments seemed the majestic voice of a divine being. I listened with breathless eagerness. The curtain rose. I beheld Faust; a rich, mellow voice was heard in melancholy invocation; the far-off song of the villagers died away in the distance; then, Mephistopheles appeared with his cutting sarcasms; I shuddered with Faust, — with him, too, I trembled at the vision of Marguerite.

After that everything was one ecstatic dream. A famous foreign cantatrice sang. Her voice of flute-like purity penetrated to the inmost depths of my soul. I longed to listen to her forever, to create for this angelic voice melodies worthy of it. In the depths of the little stall which I occupied alone, the tears streamed down upon my clasped hands, and I murmured again and again like one bereft of reason, “I, too, am a musician; I, too, am a musician! I, too, must compose music, or I shall die!”

When the performance ended amid the frenzied ap-

plause of the audience and a shower of costly exotics lavished upon the idol of the hour, I was so intoxicated with delight that I wonder I did not throw myself on the stage in my enthusiasm. I left the theatre without even knowing it, and roamed about the streets most of the night. It was not until the first gray light of dawn appeared in the east that I returned to my little attic-room, and threw myself on the bed to dream on and on with wildly staring eyes.

A thousand vague fancies tumultuously crowded my brain. All those voices which were ever murmuring and sighing, and singing and wailing in my ears — I would unprison them; I would give them form, make them audible to others as well as to myself. What I, too, would write would also delight the world long after my hand had crumbled into dust; and perhaps some day, while listening to the melody I had created out of nought, some human being would bless the day when Dmitri Térentieff came into the world.

Oh, how assiduously I would study now! How thoroughly I would master the rules that had seemed so difficult and tiresome before! for I was resolved that my music should be correct; I would not allow myself to write until I was sure of myself.

The rough outlines of a musical composition were already formed in my mind. I would call it "The Steppes." It would be a pastoral, a Russian pastoral. In it should be depicted the peacefulness of our long winter days. One should hear the whistling of the wind, the shrill cry of the wild-fowl; then the soft rustling of the spring foliage; the weird, wild songs of our peasants, the gallop of wild horses in the distance, and

high above all the wind, — the now tempestuous, now gentle, wind of our plains, which so often haunted my dreams with its strange, wild harmony.

I seized a sheet of music paper, — it belonged to Naboth, but I did not even think of that, — and began to write with feverish haste. I forgot where I was, and was writing like a madman, when the door suddenly opened, and Népomuk Raabzinsky appeared on the threshold.

“What the devil are you doing this morning?” he exclaimed. “Is it possible that you’ve become deaf?”

“I — I did not hear you,” I replied, hastily concealing my paper under a pile of note-books.

“Is this a holiday?”

“No. Why do you ask?”

“Because it’s after ten o’clock, and here you sit doing nothing!”

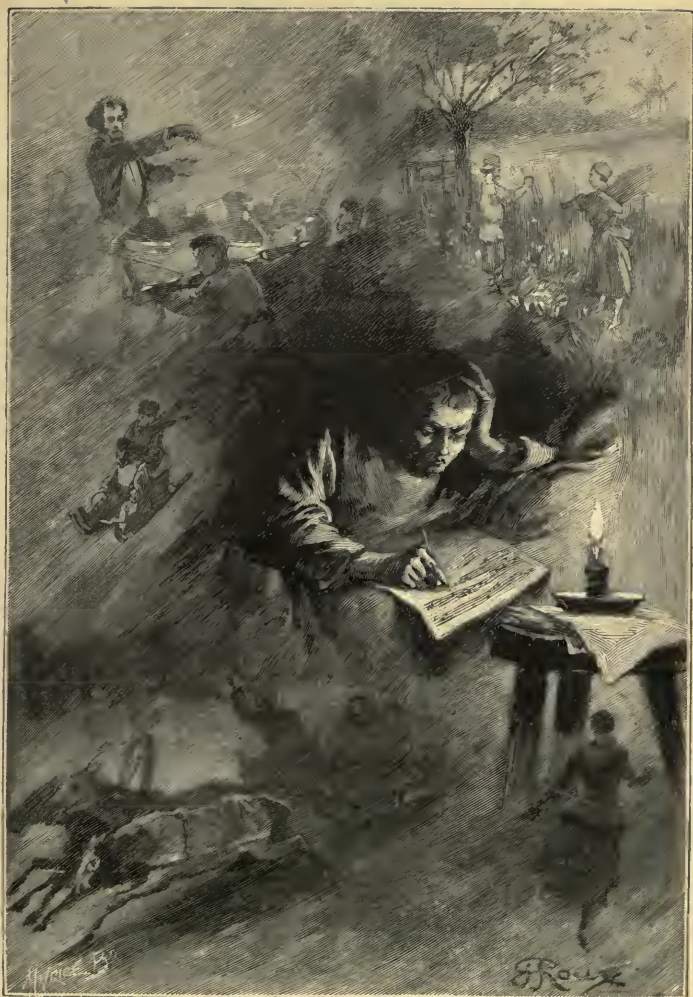
I uttered an exclamation of dismay, and seizing my cap, ran at the top of my speed to the Gymnasium. I rapped at the little door, — the large doors were closed at this hour of the day, — and the bearded face of Gavruchka appeared.

“I forgot myself this morning,” I panted. “Will you let me in so I can make my excuses to the assistant superintendent?”

“Ah, ha! my little Térentieff, so you’ve got caught at last!” sneered the janitor, with savage glee. “Let you in? Not if I know myself. See, there’s your name on the tardy list. Two more escapades of this kind, and we’ll be well rid of you. Clear out now, clear out, you young rascal!”

And still sneering, he slammed the door in my face.

As soon as I entered the schoolroom that afternoon I was summoned into the presence of M. Sarévine, who questioned me closely as to the cause of my absence



DMITRI DEEP IN HIS MUSICAL STUDIES.





that morning. I would not have told him the true reason for anything in the world, so I merely gave as an excuse that I had failed to notice the time.

The assistant superintendent did not seem at all satisfied with this reason. He told me rather sternly that I must have a better excuse to offer in future, and reminded me that a third violation of the rule would result in my expulsion. I withdrew; and for a long time afterward Gav-ruchka was in the habit of sneering as I passed in and out, and of exclaiming, —

“ Only twice more, Térentieff! only twice more! and then you'll be turned out, — turned out of Saint-Vladimir!”

The idea seemed to cause him infinite satisfaction.

From that day a two-fold existence began for me. Outwardly I was unchanged. I came and went as before. I prepared my translations, wrote exercises, solved problems in algebra and geometry, committed lessons to memory, interchanged more or less cutting taunts with Capiton Strodtmann, and talked with Serge about everything but the subject uppermost in my mind; but I did all these things with strains of sweetest music ever ringing in my ears. My body was there, but my soul was far away, floating lightly upon the sea of melody that floods the entire world for those who have ears to hear it. I followed this secret melody untiringly; I noted the sound of the wind and rain, the fall of the snow, the voices of men and of animals; all around me I heard the music of the spheres.

My craving for music had become so intense that I spent every penny I could spare in attending the opera or concerts. How I blessed my student's cap, that secured me admission to such places of entertainment at one-fourth of the regular rates!

I became familiar with the masterpieces of many great composers that winter, and had the pleasure of listening to many famous musicians. Once it was Rubenstein. After the concert, the young men harnessed themselves to his carriage to drag him home. It is needless to say that I was one of the first to volunteer.

I did not dare to confide my secret to Népomuk Raabzinsky. I feared his stinging ridicule and sneers too much; besides, he pretended rather to despise our national music, and I did not feel inclined to show him what I had written until it would furnish less food for criticism.

I, on the contrary, greatly admired the productions of our native composers, for they seemed so deeply imbued with the very spirit of our country, climate, and people. Our music differs from that of other nations unquestionably; it is less scientific perhaps; but it possesses a peculiar charm of its own, and is remarkably original in its character. Indeed, its individuality is so marked that it can hardly fail to astonish foreigners, and incur a great risk of being entirely misunderstood. But what does that matter? — we Russians comprehend it; and my sole ambition, then and now, is to win a place among the famous composers of my native land.

But in the midst of these delightful dreams, I became painfully conscious that the year's schooling for which Nicholas Ivanovitch had paid in advance would soon expire, and how was I to continue my course of study? I certainly could not hope to do so on my present earnings. I resolved to consult Serge, who was an eminently practical and sensible fellow, and who might be able to suggest some feasible plan.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A SURPRISE.

ON leaving the class-room the following morning I took Serge aside.

"I want to consult you," I said, with some embarrassment.

"About what?"

"About something that will surprise you perhaps. Do you think it would be possible for a boy of my age to earn a tolerably large amount every month?"

Serge reflected a moment before he replied.

"That depends," he replied, at last. "The boy's position in life would have a good deal to do with it. If he belongs to the working class, I not only think, but know, that he could earn his living. As for a large amount of money —"

"But that is not the question," I interrupted. "To speak frankly, I am the person referred to. Do you think it would be possible for me to earn, not enough to pay for my food, — I am doing that now, — but to pay my tuition at the Gymnasium as well?"

"You seem surprised," I continued. "You can hardly have supposed that I am a Cræsus" (casting a glance at my shabby garments), "but you probably have no idea how little I possess, — simply *nothing*."

"But you've attended school up to this time," began Serge, "and —"

I gave him a brief account of my former life and of the situation in which I found myself on my arrival in Moscow.

"What! is it possible that you are the young Dmitri mentioned in poor M. Bérézoff's will?" exclaimed Serge, who had listened to my story with evident interest.

"I cannot doubt it."

"That explains the mystery," remarked Serge, thoughtfully. "Do you know why Strodtmann hates you, — for it is evident that he does hate you?"

"No, upon my word! I have never been able to explain his animosity."

"Well, I think I understand it now I know who you are. Of course you are not aware that Strodtmann's father — a German, who married a Russian wife — was for a long time the manager of M. Bérézoff's large estates. Nicholas Ivanovitch was one of the most kind-hearted of men, and seemed — especially after the loss of his brother — to be greatly attached to young Strodtmann, who was born in M. Bérézoff's house while his father was living there. In fact, it was generally supposed that he would make him his heir, and I believe Capiton grew up in this belief. M. Bérézoff having died without a will, he inherited nothing. Now, I reason in this way: Strodtmann considered himself M. Bérézoff's heir, so he regards you as the cause of his disappointment, though you derived no benefit from it; consequently he hates you, and shows his hatred on all occasions."

"Oh, do you really think such a thing is possible?" I exclaimed, greatly agitated.

"Very possible, especially when one knows the person."

"But I am in no way accountable for his disappointment."

"No, but he cannot forgive you for having unconsciously frustrated his hopes. You may believe what I say. I know Capiton. We have been schoolmates all our lives, and I understand his disposition perfectly. But you must come and see my father. He is sure to take an interest in you if you tell him your story, for M. Bérzoff was one of his best friends. So forget your bashfulness, and come home with me. I should be very glad to have you."

I shrank from the idea of presenting myself at M. Kratkine's house, but finally allowed myself to be persuaded, and accompanied Serge to his pleasant home.

M. Kratkine was evidently an extremely practical man. He perceived all the pros and cons of a question at a glance; but the most prominent trait in his character seemed to be determination. His mind once made up, he was resolved to reach the goal at any cost; and when Serge introduced me to him, I no longer marvelled at the forty examinations. Neither forty examinations, nor a hundred, nor a thousand, would induce Arcade Panlovitch Kratkine to deviate one hair's breadth from the path he had marked out for himself.

M. Kratkine received me very kindly, and was good enough to devote several minutes of his valuable time to the consideration of my case, when Serge explained it to him.

"There is but one way out of the difficulty," he remarked at last, — "Dmitri Fédorovitch must be allowed to finish his course of study at the Gymnasium free of charge."



“Do you mean a scholarship, sir?” I stammered. “I fear I am not prepared —”

“Then you must prepare yourself,” said M. Kratkine, in a tone that admitted of no reply. “I am on the best of terms with the superintendent, Ivan Alexandrovitch Pérevsky. I will take all the steps necessary, and it will be an easy matter to secure such a favor for the son of Térentieff. His name is sufficient recommendation. You must not spare yourself, but work hard and gain a good stand in your class. I am sure Serge will take pleasure in assisting you, if necessary. He has often spoken of you before, and always in the highest terms. Now, boys, I must get to work, so *au revoir*. Dmitri Fédorovitch, you have learned the way here now; you must not forget it. No dawdling now, Serge. You know you have a Greek exercise to prepare for to-morrow, and Greek is not your *forte*.”

We left the study, and I thanked Serge for having introduced me to his father, though I was overwhelmed at the thought of the ordeal before me. And my music? Should I be obliged to give that up? The mere idea of such a sacrifice appalled me; but I determined to keep up a brave heart, and leaving my schoolmate to struggle with his Greek, I turned my steps homeward, secretly resolved to conquer. Arcade Panlovitch's good intentions must not be frustrated by my stupidity.

I was obliged to pass the Gymnasium on my way home, and as I was crossing the square with my hands in my pocket, my head well up in the air, and my books under my arm, I was almost knocked down by an enormous dog that bounded suddenly out upon me, barking and wagging his tail in the most frantic manner, and licking my face with his long red tongue.



DMITRI'S MEETING WITH SNAP AND PORPHYRE.



Words can scarcely describe the astonishment I felt when I recognized in this half-frenzied animal my good dog Snap, — Snap, draggled and muddy and emaciated, but yet the same dear old Snap, the most faithful, affectionate, and demonstrative of dogs and friends.

“Snap, my good dog, my brave comrade, is it really you? Where did you come from? How glad I am to see you again! But how came you here?” I cried, covering him with caresses, while my cap fell to the ground on one side of me, and my pile of books on the other.

As if to answer my question, Snap relaxed his hold and darted toward the main entrance of the Gymnasium. It was nearly dark; but in the dim light I faintly discerned a human form crouching on the step, and rushing toward it, I beheld — Porphyre, — Porphyre thin, gaunt, and in rags, with no trace of the rosy cheeks and majestic proportions of former days, but Porphyre, unquestionably.

I remained mute with astonishment for a moment, then recovering my powers of speech, exclaimed, —

“You here! why, all Sitovka must have decided to visit Moscow this evening. How are you? Is your father here too? It was certainly very kind in you to bring Snap. How glad I am to see you, old fellow! But you don’t look like yourself. What is the matter; are you ill?”

For Porphyre did not attempt to answer a single one of my questions, but gazed at me with a half-dazed expression, and seemed to have considerable difficulty in holding himself up.

“I’m not ill,” he at last said feebly, as if his parched lips would hardly allow him to speak; “I’m hungry.”

I fumbled in my pocket, and finding a few kopecks, dragged Porphyre to a little shop near by, where I or-

dered some rolls, a bit of cheese, and a big glass of beer for him. Snap, too, having shown unmistakable signs of hunger, I bought a plate of bones and broken pieces for him. He devoured these in the twinkling of an eye; and the two pilgrims having been thus refreshed, we left the shop.

“Now do tell me where you dropped from?” I cried eagerly.

Porphyre cast a wondering glance around him.

“Yes, I’m here at last,” he said in a tone of profound conviction.

“Yes, I see you are; but how is it that you happen to be here? Where did you come from?”

“From Sitovka, of course!”

“How stupid you are! Of course you came from Sitovka, but how did you come, and why? Did Agathon Illarionovitch bring you?”

“No, it was Snap.”

“Snap?”

“Yes. You see he has done nothing but run away ever since you left. The first time we caught him and shut him up in the chicken-yard, though he scared the hens nearly to death; but he jumped over the fence and ran off again. We caught him and chained him, but he broke the chain and escaped again. We caught him this time, too, and shut him up in the stable; but he would neither eat nor drink. He cried and howled incessantly, day and night. At last somebody left the stable door open, and again he broke loose and ran away. I started off in pursuit of him, and as I’d been just as miserable as he ever since you and Sacha went away—it gave me the horrors to see your house all shut up—when I found him at last,



and he looked at me imploringly, as much as to say, 'Do come with me,' I could n't refuse him; so here I am."

"Why, Porphyre, I had no idea you cared so much for me as all that!" I cried, deeply touched. "But what will your father and mother say? Did you come on foot?"

"How else could I have come? I walked every step of the way, — and a long way it is from Sitovka here, I can tell you."

"But how did you manage about food?"

Porphyre gave an eloquent shrug of the shoulders.

"It was pretty poor picking, — but here I am," he added with evident complacency.

"Have you come to stay?"

"Of course. Do you suppose I've any idea of tramping back again?"

"But, my good fellow, don't you know that I have n't a penny I can call my own? I can hardly offer you a place to lay your head. I really have no idea what I am going to do with you," I exclaimed in profound dismay.

Porphyre shrugged his shoulders.

"Nonsense! we'll manage somehow or other," he replied philosophically. "You're glad to see us, eh?" he added confidently.

"Oh, yes!" I exclaimed, in all sincerity. "In fact, I never thought I should be half so glad to see you again, old scamp!" (giving him a friendly poke in the ribs); "but if you fancy that partridges drop down from the sky here already roasted, you're very much mistaken. And Snap eats as much as any two men. I've no idea what I shall do about it, I'll be hanged if I have!"

"Is n't Sacha with you?" inquired Porphyre, with unruffled calmness.

“Sacha with me? I don’t even know whether she’s in Russia or not.”

“Vodka’s become lame,” continued Porphyre, composedly. “They put too much of a load on the wagon one day, and he fell down. He would n’t even try to get up. I seated myself on his head to keep him from kicking, and he bit me. He’s a hateful beast.”

“Poor Vodka! I’m surprised you did n’t bring him too.”

“I really believe I would if I had thought of it,” replied Porphyre, in such perfect good faith that I could n’t help laughing in his face.

“Well, we had better go home now and go to bed. To-morrow we’ll talk matters over, and see what is to be done.”

“I’ll go to the Gymnasium with you, if you wish,” said Porphyre, with an air of profound resignation.

“You flatter yourself that they would be only too delighted to have you, I suppose,” I retorted, with an irony that was entirely lost upon him.

I conducted my two unexpected guests to my humble garret; and Porphyre no sooner set eyes on the bed than he flung himself upon it, and was snoring hard before I had time to say a word.

As for Snap, he caught sight of my sheepskin coat lying in a corner, and, after turning himself around two or three times, stretched himself out upon it with a long sigh of relief, and was soon sleeping the sleep of the just.

When I started for school the next morning, Porphyre was so tired that I would not allow him to get up.

“Stay here with Snap,” I said, “and when I return at noon, we’ll have a talk.”

“But — but I should like to have some breakfast.”

“So should I, you incorrigible gourmand! But you must learn not to make an idol of your stomach, my dear fellow. We will breakfast — when we can!”

Poor Porphyre! he fancied it was only necessary for him to be hungry to see his breakfast appear forthwith.

Meanwhile I was becoming more and more unable to see how I was going to get out of this scrape. Serge noticed my preoccupied air, and when he questioned me, I told him of the unexpected arrival of my old friends, but said nothing about the embarrassing position in which it had placed me.

“What a queer fellow he must be,” Serge exclaimed, when I had finished. “I would like to see him. You must be delighted to have your dog with you again. Is he a handsome dog?”

“Superb; as big as a calf, and perfect in every respect.”

“Let’s go and see him, will you?” proposed Serge, whose curiosity had been excited by my eulogiums.

I assented of course. Serge was probably surprised at the wretchedness of my quarters, but he showed no signs of it. He praised Snap in the most enthusiastic manner, and declared he had never seen his equal at any of the numerous dog-shows he had attended.

When Serge left us, I hastened to that old rascal Naboth, and by dint of threats, entreaties, and promises, succeeded in inducing him to advance me a rouble,— and a silver rouble at that. At first he would give me only a paper rouble;<sup>1</sup> but I pleaded so eloquently that he finally yielded, though his lamentations when he parted with his money equalled those of the prophet Jeremiah.

<sup>1</sup> A paper rouble is only about half the value of a silver rouble.

I rushed home with bread and milk for all three of us. We had a good meal, and Porphyre told me all the Sitovka news without missing a single mouthful.

All the people down there were entirely ignorant of my misfortunes, and really seemed to believe that I was living in the lap of luxury. They thought it was only necessary to come to Moscow to succeed there; and I suspect that it was a vague hope of becoming one of the great of the earth (like myself), as well as his sincere affection for me, that brought Porphyre to Moscow. I had no little trouble in convincing him that I had little or nothing to live on, and that he would be obliged to work, exactly as I did. Unwilling to take upon myself the responsibility of his sojourn in Moscow, I did my best to persuade him to return to his native village; but he absolutely refused to listen to me; and we finally concluded that we would content ourselves with writing to the pope, explaining the mysterious disappearance of his progeny, and hinting that some of the products of the farm, such as smoked ducks and geese, hams, sausages, and even salt fish, would be very acceptable.

While we were talking, Snap had greedily devoured his share of the bread, soaked in a little milk, and was now sleeping soundly at my feet, his honest heart filled with content at having found his master again. When it was time to return to the Gymnasium, Porphyre insisted on accompanying me; but the dread Gavručka stopped us at the gateway, and would not allow my companion to set foot in the courtyard. He even added that if Porphyre and the dog ever appeared in his presence again, he would give them a thrashing they would remember as long as they lived.

I then learned that Porphyre had gone straight to the Gymnasium the evening before, and boldly asked the janitor where I could be found. That worthy considered that any person who ventured to ask information out of school hours was guilty of an atrocious crime. He certainly must be mad! So he drove Porphyre away; but my friend, with his wonted assurance, established himself on the steps leading up to the main entrance, whence all the janitor's abuse had been powerless to dislodge him, so Gavruchka's wrath was excited to the highest pitch. On seeing the culprit again, he manifested such furious anger that I could not help laughing.

"I'll get even with you, Térentieff, you little viper!" he exclaimed, shaking his fist at me. "He laughs best who laughs last, — remember that."

"Take care, Gavruchka; anger is the worst thing possible for a man of your size! You lose your temper, the blood rushes to your head, and apoplexy carries you off in the twinkling of an eye."

"Wait a little and something will carry you off, too, you young vagabond! The clock has struck. Come in, or I'll give you a mark for tardiness."

"I say, Porphyre, you be at the gate waiting for me when school is out; and take care not to lose Snap in the streets."

"Yes, yes," growled Gavruchka, closing the door and locking it with a great noise, "take care of the dog, you barefooted rascal, you good-for-nothing scallawag, etc."

For our janitor's vocabulary was rich in opprobrious epithets, and already he manifested the same deadly animosity toward Porphyre as toward us, his natural enemies.



Several days passed, during which Serge and I devoted most of our time to the rather thankless task of showing Porphyre the wonders of Moscow. I say thankless, because his utter indifference astonished us. He expressed no admiration for anything; nothing surprised him; he surveyed the most magnificent buildings with a cold and critical eye. Serge, who was quite naturally very proud of Moscow, — it being his birthplace, — was greatly piqued; but nothing could overcome Porphyre's indifference.

I introduced my old friend to Népomuk Raabzinsky, of course; but as ill luck would have it, during his very first call he had been so unfortunate as to seat himself on the maëstro's violin, and that gentleman, highly incensed, had turned us both out, and forbidden Porphyre ever to enter his presence again.

We endeavored to find some employment for the young peasant, but in vain; and I was beginning to think all three of us were doomed to die of starvation — Snap was becoming thinner every day — when we at last discovered a means of support for Porphyre.

The porter of the house adjoining the Bérézoff mansion was so often at his door that I had become tolerably well acquainted with him; and as I was asking him one day if he could tell us of any work we could get to do, a happy thought struck him.

He was getting old, and suffered greatly from rheumatic pains in his joints. His situation, like that of all his brother-porters, obliged him to watch outside eight hours every night, and this duty had become so onerous to him that he had decided to employ an assistant; so he asked Porphyre to watch half the night for him in exchange for his supper. He was to come early in the evening, eat

his supper, and sleep by the stove the first four hours of the night; then the porter was to wake him, and lend him his overcoat and boots, and, thus protected from the cold, my friend was to spend the rest of the night pacing the sidewalk in front of the house. Old Ivan promised to give him a rouble a month for his services, besides his supper.

It is needless to say that we accepted his offer very gratefully; and as Snap got into the habit of keeping Porphyre company, Ivan's wife took a fancy to the dog, and always saved him a plate of bones or scraps, so my guests soon began to look like themselves again. Indeed, Porphyre grew so stout that his clothes became much too small for him; and his arms and legs began to look very like sausages, so tightly were they encased in their coverings.

In about three weeks a letter came from Porphyre's father. After a well-deserved reproof that brought tears to the eyes of the culprit, the good pope forgave his son, at the same time announcing that his godfather, the rich farmer, touched by his forlorn situation, — we had drawn a picture that would have melted a heart of stone, — had consented to assume the expenses of his education at the Gymnasium. This news delighted us beyond measure; and the following morning I took Porphyre to our superintendent, who admitted him very willingly, and Porphyre, with the red cap proudly perched on his long thick locks, made a triumphal entry into the Gymnasium under the very eyes of the indignant janitor.

Porphyre, having been taught by his father,—a man who would tolerate no nonsense, and who was not inclined to spare the rod,—was a very fair scholar. He maintained a very creditable stand in his classes, espe-

cially in mathematics, and I soon became so accustomed to having him with me, that I quite forgot he had not always been there; and when I glanced up from my book and beheld my friend's round good-natured face, and saw Snap stretched out full length on the floor, it almost seemed to me that I was still in Sitovka.

It cost me quite an effort to recall where I really was, and to remember that never, never again would my eyes meet the loving gaze of my father!

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE VAMPIRE.

PORPHYRE'S admission to the Gymnasium was a veritable godsend to Grichine. My old friend had scarcely set foot in the school-room before the very spirit of mischief seemed to take possession of Grichine, who with every indication of intense surprise opened his little eyes to their widest extent and riveted them wonderingly upon the fat face of priest Agathon's son. But Porphyre was not a boy to be disconcerted by such a trifle. Settling himself comfortably in his seat, and resting one elbow on his desk, he proceeded to give his undivided attention to M. Golovetchov's lesson. In vain Grichine indulged in the wildest contortions, snapped the joints of his fingers, and snorted like a locomotive, answering as if in a dream when his turn came, with his eyes still fixed upon Porphyre's face; my friend did not take the slightest notice of him, and the only result of this pantomime was to excite our mirth and bring down upon us a stern reprimand from our professor.

At recess it was still worse. Grichine kept close at Porphyre's heels, imitating his every movement, and giving such a ludicrous and exaggerated imitation of his manner and speech that Platon Grégorov nearly died of laughter.

But such persistent efforts could hardly fail to attract Porphyre's attention sooner or later; and one day while Grichine was shambling along country fashion, with his legs far apart and his head hanging on his breast, Porphyre suddenly turned and caught him in the very act.

He gazed at his tormentor coolly for a moment, as a big, good-natured ox would gaze at a troublesome puppy who was snapping at his heels; then he seized him by the collar, and giving his hand a sudden twist, was evidently about to hurl him to the other end of the playground, when the little monkey wriggled loose from his hold, and falling at Porphyre's feet, and clasping his hands as if in abject terror, exclaimed, —

“Pardon me, noble stranger. If I have not been able to restrain my admiration on beholding you, you must impute my boldness solely to the intensity of my emotion. Spare me, and above all, spare my blouse! Its age is venerable, and its misfortunes worthy of the most profound respect. My mother — a poor widow — has often mended it for me; but if your powerful hand descends upon it, its fate is sealed.”

“Why do you want to make such a fool of yourself? Let me alone, will you?” said Porphyre, with a half-bewildered air.

“Yes; but first let me embrace you. Your magnanimity overpowers me, O most noble of scholars! Porphyre, dear, dear Porphyre Agathonovitch, — for they tell me that is your august name, — beloved model of my soul!”

And falling on Porphyre's neck, he clung there, nearly smothering him in his embrace; then flying off on another tangent, he constituted himself the champion of



the new-comer. He valiantly defended him from all aggression, even that of a purely imaginary nature; explained all our rules and customs at great length; gave him most fantastical histories of our professors and students,—in short, he strove by a thousand cunning devices to completely turn the head of this poor country lad.

I did not interfere; first, because Porphyre was certainly big enough and strong enough to defend himself if necessary; and secondly, because Grichine's pranks were so amusing that one really could not take him to task for them; besides, in spite of his countrified ways, Porphyre really possessed too much natural shrewdness to place much confidence in his new friend's absurd statements.

I recollect one scene that illustrates the relations which existed between them quite clearly.

Porphyre was suffering with a severe cold in his head, and his violent fits of sneezing and coughing had annoyed M. Pérékoff very much during a demonstration. The poor boy made an heroic effort to keep quiet; but after an interval of about five minutes the demon of influenza got the upper hand of him again, and he made the very walls tremble by another terrific paroxysm of sneezing. To crown his misfortunes, he had forgotten his pocket handkerchief.

"This is intolerable!" cried our professor, who was very quick-tempered; "one cannot hear one's self think. If you have such a cold, you had better go home."

"I shall be all right in a minute, sir, only I—athee—only I have no—athee! athee!—no hand—athee! oh, athee! athee!—no handkerchief, sir."

"Lend him a handkerchief, one of you!" exclaimed

M. Pérékoff, in evident disgust. "I can't be interrupted in this way any more. Go on, Serge Arcadiévitch."

Serge resumed his demonstration, and I hastily passed Porphyre my handkerchief. He buried his face in it, and emerged some minutes afterwards purple in the face, but much more calm. He magnanimously offered to return the handkerchief; but I declined his offer with horror, so he crumpled it up into a little wet ball, and slipped it into his pocket.

Before ten minutes had elapsed, his situation had become as desperate as ever. He made frantic signals to me; but I was not in the habit of carrying handkerchiefs about by the dozen, and I had none to offer him. M. Pérékoff was beginning to frown again, and to bestow ominous glances on the offender, when Grichine, with great deliberation, drew a big, ragged, half-soiled handkerchief from his pocket, and spreading it slowly out before him, surveyed it with a thoughtful air.

"Lend it to me, Grichine, I beg of you," whispered poor Porphyre.

Grichine shook his head.

"People don't lend such things as this for nothing," he replied sententiously.

"Oh — atchee! atchee! atchee! — oh, do, like a good fellow!"

"I'll lend it to you for a consideration," answered Grichine, deliberately.

"Oh, hurry! do hurry!"

"I'll lend it to you on condition you pay me a kopeck a blow," responded the inexorable Grichine.

"But I've only got two kopecks," pleaded Porphyre, disconsolately.

“A kopeck a blow, or you sha’n’t have it,” repeated Grichine, stoutly.

“Here, take them then,” said Porphyre, wildly, throwing him his two kopecks; then seizing Grichine’s handkerchief, and revolting against such tyranny, he used it vigorously, not once or twice, but a dozen times, in quick succession. Grichine tried to tear it from his grasp, but the other clung to it with the energy of despair; they kicked each other stealthily but viciously under the benches, and would certainly have been sent from the room if the session had not ended just then.

Grichine’s habit of extorting money for any and every thing had won him the name of the Miser Student; but strange to say, he was neither hated nor despised, as would have seemed natural under the circumstances; in fact, there was something so frank and pleasant about him, and he smiled so slyly and good-naturedly when his extortions were alluded to, that no one really felt any grudge against him.

Capiton Strodtmann took advantage of this propensity on the part of his fellow student, and hired him to write all his exercises for him, — a fact which, by the way, resulted in a startling difference between his written lessons and those which he recited; and though Strodtmann chose to regard Grichine rather in the light of an *employé*, and spoke to him a little haughtily at times, he was really too useful to him to be treated with contumely. As for Grichine, he troubled himself very little about Capiton’s opinion or conduct, and openly avowed a profound contempt for him.

Sometimes Porphyre and I went to Goltchov’s *pension* to get our dinner, when we were tired of living on bread

and milk, or dry bread, and on his days of opulence we usually met Grichine there. The *pension* was patronized by the pupils of several public and private schools, who took their meals at a long table presided over by a repulsive old German woman. She spoke an almost unintelligible jargon, and nearly poisoned us by her horrible cookery. I don't know where she got the meat she placed before us, but the mere sight of it often turned my stomach.

At Sitovka I had always devoured my big chunk of black bread with the best of appetites, and quaffed clear cold water with never-failing delight; but the meat old dame Goltchov set before me inspired me with unconquerable disgust, and her sour, husky bread only increased my distaste for her viands. By some secret understanding with her butcher doubtless, the meat she doled out to us with a parsimonious hand consisted almost entirely of quivering, half-viscid fat, accompanied by the tiniest possible scrap of lean; but it was an unwritten, though no less rigorously observed, law among the successive generations of students who had occupied seats at her table, that it was a disgrace to like fat, and a positive crime to eat it, and any person who so far forgot himself as to yield to such a depraved taste was regarded as an unnatural monster; so the plates usually left the table bordered with scraps of fat, especially on the days we had boiled beef for dinner. Implicit obedience to this regulation entailed no sacrifice upon me, however, for the mere sight of this oily substance spoiled my appetite, and I was frequently obliged to leave the lean meat as well as the fat.

It was soon after my arrival in Moscow, and during

one of my first meals at Dame Goltchov's table, that Grichine Yégov chanced to occupy a seat opposite me. I noticed that neither of his neighbors at table exchanged a word with him, and no one took the slightest notice of him when he spoke. This surprised me a little; but I probably should not have thought much about it, had not my neighbor, a student at another Gymnasium, given me a terrific poke in the ribs when I replied to some remark that Grichine chanced to make.

I looked at him in astonishment.

"Are you talking to him?" he whispered.

"Of course. He's a classmate of mine, and a capital fellow. Why should n't I speak to him?"

"Nobody takes any notice of him here."

"What is that to me?"

"But he's completely ostracized, I tell you."

"Why? What has he done?"

"Watch him after dinner and you'll see for yourself. Look at him now. Ugh! does n't it make you sick?"

For Grichine was devouring a big piece of fat with great apparent relish. I saw nothing so very reprehensible about that, however, all tastes not being the same, fortunately.

"Is that all?" I inquired of my neighbor.

"You'll see," he replied gloomily, at the same time lifting up his hands with a gesture of horror.

My curiosity being excited, I paused at the door before going out, and furtively watched Grichine, as my neighbor had bidden me. He was the last to leave the table, and imagine my surprise, when I saw him rise, and drawing a brown paper-bag from his pocket, walk around the table, and adroitly push into it all the cold, greasy scraps left



on the plates! He did this deliberately, and apparently without the slightest desire to conceal the deed; in fact, there was an expression of stern, almost ferocious determination on his usually good-natured face.

"How can you be willing to do such a disgusting thing?" I said to him rudely, as he came out.

He looked up at me. There was a strangely patient and gentle expression in his eyes, — an expression of resignation, almost, it seemed to me; but I had scarcely had time to notice it when his eyes began to sparkle with all their wonted mischievousness.

"It's a great secret, but I'm going to tell you," he replied.

"What is it?"

"Well, my good fellow, you must n't tell anybody, of course, but I'm a vampire," he answered, with a mocking laugh.

And he rushed off, awaking all the echoes with his shrill whistle as he ran down the street.

I stood gazing after him in profound astonishment. I was completely mystified by his words; afterwards, when his conduct was explained, I rejoiced that I had not ignored and insulted my schoolmate like the others.

Whenever I dined at Goltchov's, and Grichine was present, I was obliged to witness the same disagreeable sight; and Porphyre, who had a true country lad's horror of doubtful meats, really believed what Grichine had said, and regarded him as a sort of ghoul.

Meanwhile, the examination for the scholarships had taken place. After a month of arduous study, I ventured to compete, and just succeeded in passing the examination. I even succeeded in beating the most stupid of my



“WHAT DELIGHTFUL HOURS I SPENT ALONE AT THE ORGAN!”



competitors by half a point. But even half a point has its charms when it is on the right side, as I discovered when I received notice of my appointment, and ran to thank M. Kratkine, who had so kindly made my needs known to our superintendent, and who seemed delighted at my success. Serge, too, was much pleased.

"I'm glad you're a free scholar," he remarked, "for now you'll have to work hard to repay the debt of gratitude you owe the Gymnasium, if for no other reason."

"But I do work, I assure you."

"Oh, yes, you study fairly well; but you're too whimsical. You don't like this, and you don't like that. If one really desires to succeed, one must apply one's self faithfully to every branch of learning. Your literary style need be none the worse because you take a little more pains with your mathematics."

Serge certainly practised what he preached; and since that time, I have often had good reason to acknowledge the wisdom of his counsels.

But how I hated those tiresome figures! And yet, the art to which I had secretly consecrated my life is one, above all others, in which mathematical accuracy and precision are indispensable.

I was secretly going on with my music. Népomuk Raabzinsky, satisfied with the progress I had made in theory, had at last allowed me to lay my hands on the piano. After that, I soon became able to give expression to the musical fancies that were ever flitting through my brain. Subsequently, he gave his choir almost entirely into my charge; then what delightful hours I spent alone at the organ in the great dimly lighted church, lost in that divine frenzy of which the poet speaks!

My first year at the Gymnasium ended uneventfully but satisfactorily; and the following autumn, — after a vacation devoted entirely to music but for an occasional tramp of five or six hours through the surrounding country, — I passed into the Second Class, in company with my fellow students of the first division of the Third Class.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### A RACE ON SKATES.

ABOUT three months after I entered the Second Class, I was sitting alone in my room, trying to fix my mind on a perplexing problem in algebra, when the door opened noisily, and Porphyre rushed in like a cyclone.

"Have you heard the news?" he cried. "We're going to have a glorious lark in about a fortnight. Count Brovsky, an old student of Saint-Vladimir, is going to give us a grand entertainment on the ice, with skating races between the different classes, and all sorts of games, and a fine lunch. Oh, it makes my mouth water just to think of it! Won't it be glorious! And, Dmitri, you must certainly try for the Second Class prize. I'm sure you'd win it. It's as good as yours already. Hurrah, we'll show these Moscow dandies what skating is!"

Porphyre was beside himself. The prospect of such festivities had completely turned his head. His enthusiasm communicated itself to me; and throwing aside my books, we rushed to the Gymnasium to hear further particulars.

"You'll compete, of course," Serge remarked on our next meeting. "We are counting on you. Strodtsmann, too, is one of our best skaters, but I confess I should n't be sorry to see you beat him."

"I'd rather like it myself," I replied; "but I fear it would interfere too much with my work."

"Nonsense! all the rest of us will be in the same boat, so why need you care if you don't have your lessons quite as well as usual? You ought to go into training at once. You're our champion, don't forget that!"

To tell the truth I did not require much urging; and after that, almost every leisure moment was spent on the ice, either alone or in company with Porphyre, Kratkine, and other classmates. We talked of nothing but skates and skating, the respective merits of each method of skating furnishing food for continual and excited controversy.

Capiton, who was the chosen champion of a portion of the Second Class, was equally assiduous in his efforts to get himself in the best possible form; but though he skated with remarkable ease and grace, I did not feel very much afraid of him; for I had been born with skates on my feet, so to speak, and the long distances I had skated while in Sitovka prevented me from being troubled with many misgivings regarding the result of the race.

Among Capiton's most devoted followers were Savine Podnier and Luvine, two rather disagreeable fellows, and slighting remarks and sly innuendoes were greatly in vogue with them. Strodtmann was often heard to mutter something about "intruders," and "ragged clowns," and "country bumpkins," — epithets which I felt sure were addressed to Porphyre and me; but I could not vent my wrath upon him for the very good reason that having asked Capiton fairly and squarely if he was talking to me, he feigned the greatest surprise.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Térentieff?"

he exclaimed. "What do you mean? I was n't even thinking of you."

"If you have anything to say to me, say it and have done with it," I retorted, much irritated by his manner.

"I've no idea what you're driving at, my dear fellow. Have n't I always shown the greatest indulgence for your — your countrified manners and bucolic — innocence?"

"If you want to settle it with fists, you'll find a bucolic strength in mine that won't be much to your liking, perhaps," I answered savagely.

"Don't lose your temper; it is very silly in a lad like you," he said in his most supercilious tones. "Understand once for all, that gentlemen do not indulge in fist-cuffs in the first place, and in the second place, they never fight without a cause."

I turned my back upon him.

"These rustics really hope to win," said Podnier, sneeringly, as I moved away. "What insatiable creatures they are! We poor Moscow boys won't know where to go soon."

"Oh, you need n't be troubled about that," responded Capiton. "I can beat each and every one of them, even skating backwards."

"You're able to, unquestionably," replied Podnier; "if it were a matter of mending rags or sawing wood like a peasant, I should n't be so sure of your success."

This was a very transparent allusion to an incident that had occurred only a few days before. Podnier had chanced to pass our door just as I was sawing some wood for Ouliana Pétrovna, who had complained that the load she had purchased was too long for her stove.

I despised this warfare of pin-pricks too much to con-

descend to reply; so I contented myself with jostling them roughly and glowering upon them as we re-entered the Gymnasium, looking them full in the face all the while. They pretended not to notice it, however, and it was not until after I had passed them that they ventured to indulge in a sneering laugh.

The eventful day dawned at last. The sun rose clear and bright, and the day promised to be superb. Old Ivan had excused Porphyre from duty the night before, and the latter improved his opportunity so well that I had considerable difficulty in stopping his snoring and inducing him to get up the next morning.

"There's plenty of time," he muttered, turning his face to the wall.

"Get up! get up this minute, or I'll go without you;" I exclaimed, giving him a vigorous thump in the back.

I succeeded in getting him out of bed at last, but another difficulty then presented itself. He absolutely refused to make a toilet suited to the occasion, pleading as an excuse that the water was too cold. In fact, I had just broken a thick coating of ice in the bucket.

"But it is the best way in the world to warm yourself, you simpleton!" I cried. "Only milksops bathe in warm water! It does very well for infants and women. Come, enough said, wash and have it over with!"

I was obliged to use force, however; and as he continued to rebel, I took the soap and rubbed it in his face. As he struggled with me, half laughingly, half angrily, he got the soapsuds into his eyes, and when he tried to dry them, he nearly blinded himself by using his big gray caftan instead of a towel.

We were obliged to go to Saint-Vladimir first, to get

our skates, which had been left there the afternoon before. I had devoted nearly an hour to repairing mine, for I had polished the steel until it shone like silver, and bought a new set of strong but pliable straps that cost me ten kopecks. I was resolved to leave nothing to chance in this contest.

The Gymnasium seemed to be the place of rendezvous for all the students that morning, and Gavruchka turned crimson with wrath on seeing the noisy crowd appear.

"What do you want now, you gang of good-for-nothings?" he cried. "Is there no such thing as getting rid of you? I thought I should have some peace this morning, but you keep on coming."

"Gavruchka is jealous because he isn't going to the fête!" shouted one of the little fellows. We all laughed, and the janitor went back to his room, grunting and growling.

It took some time for all the boys to find their skates in the chaos that reigned in the little building where we kept our balls, bats, and sleds; but they finally succeeded, and we then set out in high spirits for Count Brovsky's country-place.

"I think you've got a better chance to win than Strodtmann," cried Grichine. "You're more supple than he is, and longer winded; everybody says you'll beat him, and I'm sure I hope you will. I don't like Capiton."

"Nor do I, I assure you."

We soon reached the gateway of the Count Brovsky's château, an immense building surrounded by extensive and beautifully kept grounds, in the suburbs of Moscow. The large number of private carriages already in the grounds indicated that a large crowd would be in attend-



ance; the lofty trees, covered with snow and icicles, made a beautiful picture as they stood out against the blue sky; and what a pleasure it was to breathe this pure, crisp air! I was in the best of spirits; and Serge and Porphyre, who were walking beside me, shared my good humor.

Suddenly we paused with an exclamation of delight on beholding the lake,—a sheet of smooth, glittering ice extending as far as the eye could reach. Count Brovsky, our superintendent, and our assistant superintendent, and a number of their friends met us on the margin of the lake.

The rules that were to govern the races were explained to us. Our class was to begin.

A list of the students who intended to compete for the Second Class prize had been given to Count Brovsky by our superintendent. There were thirty of them in all, and they were to be divided into two parties of fifteen pupils each, chosen by lot. Each party was to skate, separately, a distance of two versts, the end of the course being marked by a stake. The victor in the first party was then to compete with the victor in the second party, and would be obliged to win two races out of three—each race one verst only—to secure the prize,—a handsome bicycle given by the count.

The drawing began. Capiton found himself in the first division; so did Porphyre and Serge; Grichine, Podnier, and I in the second.

The first division formed into line.

“Are you ready?” cried the count.

“Yes.”

A shot resounded, and the fifteen competitors were off. At first they seemed to maintain an unbroken front; then

to form a sort of curving ribbon on the smooth surface of the ice; but this soon resolved itself into tiny black specks here and there. Then I saw Serge take the lead, then Porphyre, then Serge again; but finally Capiton, easily recognized by his red shirt and tall stature, darted by him like a flash of lightning, and reached the goal first.

“Hurrah! hurrah! Bravo, Strodtmann! bravo!” shouted the crowd.

“Now the others!” cried the count.

We formed in line; again the signal sounded. We were off.

I skated rather slowly at first, in order to reserve my strength for the last moment. Grichine, Platon Grégorov, and Podnier led the party by turn. When we were within half a verst of the goal I quickened my speed very considerably, and flying by the others, reached the stake fully three seconds before Podnier.

My victory was applauded as enthusiastically as Strodtmann’s had been. As my schoolmates had predicted, we were to be the contestants in the final race.

It is customary for the two competitors to shake hands before starting, as a proof that the race is to be conducted in an honest and friendly manner.

I extended my hand to Capiton, looking him straight in the eyes all the while, but he scarcely touched it, and I noticed that he seemed to shun my gaze.

Plenty of time to take breath was allowed us; then the signal was again given.

For half a verst we skated along side by side; then Capiton pushed on with so much energy that he got about eight feet in advance of me, and this distance between us

remained unchanged until we came in sight of the stake; then, exerting my strength to the uttermost, I passed my opponent, and reached the goal first, he following close at my heels.

Frenzied shouts of "Bravo, Térentieff, bravo! Hurrah, hurrah!" greeted my victory. My classmates crowded around me, slapped me on the back approvingly, shook hands with me again and again, and waved their caps wildly in the air during the five minutes allowed us for rest. We were all greatly excited; Capiton alone was silent and gloomy, and Porphyre told me afterwards that he heard him mutter, "I'll beat that peasant if I have to die for it."

Again we took our places side by side, Strodtmann and I. My blood was coursing swiftly through my veins now. A wild longing for the fray and for success therein animated both body and soul; I could see nothing but the glittering ice, with that tiny black speck in the distance, and my opponent beside me, quivering like a race horse. To win, to win, to reach the goal first—that was the only desire I had in the world now!

Capiton soon pushed on ahead, as in the previous race; but I quickly overtook him, and we flew along side by side, almost touching each other. We were less than a hundred yards from the stake when the strap on my left skate broke, the skate turned, I stumbled and nearly fell. I regained my equilibrium, however, by a violent effort; but Capiton had already rounded the stake. I reached it two seconds afterwards, and I noticed he was as pale as death.

He was declared winner of the second race.

"It seems very strange when you took care to put new

straps on your skates, and grease them too," cried Porphyre. "They were in perfect order."

"It is all the more strange as I saw your skates in the hands of a certain person late yesterday afternoon at the Gymnasium," said Grichine, significantly. "I knew them by the old-fashioned curve at the end of the runner."

"Come, come, don't let us waste any more time talking. I must either exchange skates with you, or fix these!" I cried, trembling with impatience.

"Take mine!" exclaimed Serge, eagerly.

"I fear they're a little too short. Yours, Porphyre, would be too large. I should much prefer to keep mine, as I am used to them. Has any one a stout piece of twine? Quick! I have no time to lose."

Fortunately Porphyre's capacious pockets contained a large assortment of strings. I hastily seized one, and the five minutes allowed us for rest had not elapsed before I had my skate fastened securely, if not elegantly, upon my foot. This time the longing for victory was mingled with a feeling of intense anger. Grichine's words had aroused a terrible suspicion in my mind.

Could it be that Capiton had done such a contemptible thing as to change or cut my skate-strap in order to make me lose the race? It seemed inconceivable; but what was the meaning of his pallor and averted gaze just now?

"We'll have it out now," I said, looking him full in the face as we stood side by side, ready to start. "My strap won't break this time."

He gave me a strange glance in reply, and the signal was again given.

Strodtmann started off with a fierce energy that augured ill for his ultimate success. I followed him swiftly, with

a heart burning with anger and disdain. Two minutes had not passed before his speed began to slacken; I saw that he was becoming tired, and I passed him without much effort. A recollection of his boast occurred to me; and wishing to teach him a lesson, I whirled myself around, and skated the rest of the distance backward, facing him, and reached the goal, while Capiton, livid and breathless, was still fifty feet from it.

A mighty shout rent the air. "Hurrah! hurrah! Bravo! Térentieff, bravo!" cried hundreds of voices. My school-mates rushed forward to congratulate me, and Count Brovsky shook hands with me and complimented me very highly as he presented the much coveted bicycle.

I was not allowed to take part in any of the other races, of course; but I remained to witness them, as well as the games of divers kinds that followed. Capiton, on the contrary, disappeared immediately after our race.

"I am almost certain that it was Capiton who played that dastardly trick on you," remarked Serge. "Grichine saw him with your skates in his hands yesterday afternoon in the tool-house. He pretended he had taken them by mistake, the miserable sneak!"

In spite of the delight I very naturally felt at my success, this suspicion annoyed me very much; but I resolved to think no more about it, and to divert my mind. I turned my attention to the crowd that had assembled to witness the races. Some of these people skated remarkably well, and among the most agile and graceful was a young girl about twelve years of age, handsomely dressed in a gray velvet pelisse trimmed with costly fur. Her dainty head was enveloped in a veil of silvery gauze that concealed her face, as she darted about as lightly and



swiftly as a bird. An old white-haired gentleman seemed to have charge of her.

Suddenly she left her companion, and came straight toward me, stopping short directly in front of me.

"Is it possible you don't know me, Dmitri?" she cried joyfully.

"Sacha! Is it you? Oh, how glad I am to see you again! Whoever would have thought it?" I exclaimed, giving her a hearty hug. "My dear little sister, how came you here?"

"We arrived in Moscow only two days ago. Mme. Lebanoff was obliged to leave Nice very unexpectedly to come and see an aunt who was extremely ill. She died before we reached Moscow, however, so we shall soon leave for St. Petersburg. How delighted I was when you won the race, dear Dmitri! I recognized you the minute I set eyes on you, and I cried, 'Vive Téréntieff!' until my throat ached."

"How you've grown!" I exclaimed, still holding her hands and gazing at her with wonder. "You're quite a fashionable young lady now. Have you forgotten me, Sacha?"

"Forgotten! when not a day passes that I don't think of you and the happy years we spent together!"

"Will you remain here some time?"

"Only a few days, I am sorry to say. But Mme. Lebanoff has promised me that she will go with me to M. Bérézoff's to see you. I felt sure, too, that you would be here to-day, so I begged Arcadion Sémonovitch to bring me. Come and speak to him," she added, dragging me toward the old gentleman.

I perceived now that Sacha's companion was Mme.

Lebanoff's cousin, the aged baron who had accompanied the princess on her visit to our house. I bowed rather awkwardly, for his aristocratic air intimidated me a little; but he greeted me quite kindly, and told Sacha she might have a long talk while he chatted with some of his friends.

As we skated slowly along together, I told Sacha of the disappointment and trials that had attended my arrival in Moscow, — the sudden death of my benefactor, and my consequent isolation and poverty; and also how I had managed to get on without assistance from any one.

“My poor Mitia! and I have been thinking all the while that you were living comfortably and even happily in the house of your father's old friend!” sighed Sacha.

“Oh, I'm getting along finely now; but at first it was such a comfort to me to know that you were safe with Mme. Lebanoff! But now tell me about yourself. Are you happy? Do you like your new life? You look like a princess in a fairy tale,” I exclaimed admiringly.

“A queer princess!” laughed Sacha. “Ah, Mitia, if you knew how long it took, and how hard it was to transform me into a young lady, — to teach me to keep my hair smooth, and my hands white, and always wear a veil to prevent my face from chapping, and above all, never to go out alone! And then to hear from morning till night: ‘Sacha, take care of your hands, and your hair, and your figure, and your complexion.’ Oh, dear! it makes me shudder to think of it even now! But Mme. Lebanoff and dear old Arcadion Sémonovitch were so kind and good to me when I was dying of homesickness, that I began to love them, too, but not as I loved you and your father, Mitia! Ah, no! Oh, how far away from you I



DMITRI AND SACHA AT THE ICE CARNIVAL.



seemed when I was in Paris and Nice, and other places you scarcely knew the name of, my poor brother."

I asked Sacha a thousand questions. She told me how difficult it had been for her to accustom herself to her new life; how strange foreign cities had appeared to her; and how Mme. Lebanoff had called her "a little savage," and laughed at her because she could not learn to dissolve her sugar in her tea, instead of nibbling it, peasant fashion; then the misery her maid had caused her by making her change her dress several times a day, and by squeezing her poor little feet into narrow shoes. She told me, too, about her travels, — how beautiful Paris was, with its smooth streets, bordered with trees; and how she had thought of me at the opera; and how the gardener at the Lebanoff villa in Nice had just sent the princess a bouquet of violets almost as big as a cart wheel, etc.

We were still talking with all our might when Arcadion Sémonovitch rejoined us.

"Come, Alexandra, it is time to go now," he said pleasantly.

"Oh, *diédouchka*,<sup>1</sup> already?"

"But you and your friend have been talking nearly an hour, and it is considerably past Mme. Lebanoff's tea-time. Your friend must come and call on you. We are at the Hotel Ralémine on the Boulevard Tverskoï, and the princess will be glad to see you," he added courteously, turning to me.

"Oh, dear Arcadion, can't he come now?" pleaded Sacha.

"Certainly, my dear, if you desire it," replied the old

<sup>1</sup> "Dear little uncle."



gentleman, politely; but I fancied he did not greet the proposal very enthusiastically.

Just then Porphyre, who had been watching us from a distance, concluded that it would be a good time to join us, so he started toward us at a high rate of speed; but just as he reached us he stumbled and fell sprawling at our feet. I helped him up; he had a big lump on his forehead, his nose was bleeding, and he nearly overturned us in his frantic efforts to regain his equilibrium.

"I always was the most unlucky fellow alive," he murmured penitently, as he and Sacha shook hands.

"You are the same Porphyre, I see," she said, a little mischievously. "Come, we must go now."

She led the way to the carriage. It is needless to say that I shrank from the thought of confronting the princess, but I could not disappoint Sacha.

The baron motioned me to enter the vehicle, and I installed myself on the front seat. Imagine my surprise when I saw Porphyre follow us into the carriage, and drop heavily on the cushions, stepping, of course, upon Arcadion Sémonovitch's gouty toes as he did so.

"What assurance!" I thought angrily. "My own invitation was by no means pressing, and now this great simpleton must needs force himself in, and make me ridiculous!"

The old gentleman rubbed his injured foot, making a significant grimace the while. The distance to the Boulevard Tverskoï was traversed in a silence broken only by Porphyre's stentorian breathing. This was a habit of his when he was particularly well pleased.

The carriage stopped in front of a handsome house, or rather palace. Two tall powdered footmen in scarlet

livery relieved us of our wrappings. I can still see our shabby overcoats hanging in the hall beside Mme. Lebanoff's costly pelisse trimmed with blue fox! And how well I remember the supercilious air with which the lackeys watched us while we were taking off our caps!

"Come," said Sacha; and taking me by the hand she led me up a richly carpeted staircase, decorated with beautiful flowering plants in handsome china vases.

On reaching the first landing Sacha paused, lifted a portière, and after hurriedly crossing a large salon, ushered me into a smaller apartment, where Mme. Lebanoff, attired in a loose robe nearly covered with lace, was half-reclining in an immense armchair, smoking a cigarette.

"So here you are at last, my dear! How long you stayed! Tea was ready long ago. But who is this you have with you?" she continued, taking her long handled eye-glass from her belt, to inspect me.

"It is Dmitri!" cried Sacha, joyously. "I met him on the ice."

"Indeed?" said the princess, lowering her lorgnette; "but that other person, who is he?"

For Porphyre's big, round face appeared just at that moment between the draperies that covered the door.

"That is Porphyre. He is from Sitovka, too."

"Ah, well, give us all some tea, my dear," said Mme. Lebanoff. "Sit down, young gentlemen."

I obeyed as quietly as possible; but Porphyre dropped into an armchair with a thud that made the springs creak noisily.

Standing by the little table that held the tray and samovar, Sacha began to pour the tea. I watched her admir-

ingly; she seemed so perfectly at ease in the midst of all this luxury, handling the frail and costly china as if she had been accustomed to it from her birth.

A lamentable disaster suddenly disturbed this delightful state of things. Porphyre approached the table to get his cup of tea; and after bending over it and inhaling its delicious aroma for a minute or two with evident delight, he was about to pour it out in his saucer to cool, after the Sitovka fashion, when the very calamity I had apprehended occurred. His cup fell from his fingers, shattering those on the table in its fall, and the tea ran down on the carpet, and even splashed upon the Princess Lebanoff's white dress.

In the confusion that followed, Sacha got us out of the room, and I left the house more dead than alive, taking Porphyre with me. On reaching the street, I gave vent to my exasperation by thumping him fiercely in the side; but he showed no inclination to retaliate. He only repeated again and again in melancholy, even despairing tones, —

“What else could you expect of a fellow who never has any luck?”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### GRICHINE'S SECRET.

I DID not see Capiton again until I met him the following day at the Gymnasium. He colored a little and appeared a trifle embarrassed on seeing me; but to my great surprise, he came up and offered me his hand in the presence of all our schoolmates, and even congratulated me on my success of the previous day. His manner, which had been so sneering and contemptuous heretofore, was now polite, and even obsequious. It was evident that he succeeded in creating the impression he desired; that is to say, in impressing such of our schoolmates as did not know him intimately with the belief that he was a generous, whole-souled fellow, who could rejoice at a comrade's success, even at his own expense. There could be no doubt that Capiton's conduct was considered worthy of all praise.

As for me, I must confess that I could not change my manner or my opinion so suddenly. I am not fickle naturally. I honestly believe that I do not become angry without good cause; but once offended it is difficult for me to forgive, and especially to forget; besides, I did not have much faith in the sincerity of Capiton's protestations, and the only effect they had upon me was to extort a slight grimace.

But what was I to do? Could I, the victor, meet the generous advances of the vanquished in a hostile and suspicious manner? No, certainly not. And though I did not entertain the shadow of a doubt that Strodtmann had endeavored to insure my defeat by a trick unworthy of an honorable opponent, the fact that I had won closed my lips effectually. I could not gain the much-coveted prize, and at the same time feel much animosity against my rival for having done everything in his power to secure it for himself, — especially as he had not succeeded. But in spite of all these arguments, and my sincere desire to meet his advances cordially, I found it impossible to do so. Deception is not my forte; but though I treated him with marked coldness, he did not appear to take offence. Quite the contrary; from that time, he always spoke of me in the highest terms, asking my advice, and praising my strength and my skill in all sorts of sports, upon all occasions.

Though I detected, or fancied I detected, a tinge of irony in all his compliments, I seemed to be the only person who entertained any such suspicion. Even toward Porphyre, the former butt of his bitter raillery, his manner changed, becoming less and less contemptuous until it degenerated into indifference, and they exchanged scarcely three words a month. Both Porphyre and Grichine were firmly convinced that my skate-strap had been cut on the under side in such a way that it would yield to the slightest strain, though it appeared as strong as ever; and neither of them felt the shadow of a doubt but that Capiton was the perpetrator of the outrage. Although I agreed with them perfectly, I begged them as a personal favor to say nothing about the affair, and they complied with my



request. Serge, who happened to be with me when Capiton rushed up to shake hands and congratulate me, never spoke to him afterwards except in the most frigid manner. He did not state his reasons; but it was easy for me to divine them.

I believe Capiton understood them quite as well as I did; but "there are none so blind as those who won't see," and he never betrayed by the slightest sign his knowledge that Serge Kratkine, the most highly respected and honorable boy in the Second Class, entertained a profound contempt for him.

But in spite of his pretended affability, when I suddenly glanced up from my book, I sometimes found his cold, gray eyes fixed upon me with such a peculiar expression that I wondered what evil he could be plotting in his secret heart.

It is needless to say that I had not ventured to present myself at Mme. Lebanoff's house again. The sorry figure we cut at our *début* was not calculated to encourage a taste for visiting; so I waited with no little impatience for a message from Sacha telling me when I could see her again. I dared not write and give her my address, for I feared that we had gotten her into trouble already by our uncouthness; and knowing she did not expect to remain in Moscow very long, I began to fear that she had left without bidding me farewell.

But on leaving the Gymnasium at noon, just one week after Count Brovsky's fête, I had the pleasure of seeing Sacha walking in the square opposite, accompanied by Arcadion Sémonovitch. The carriage was waiting for them at the edge of the sidewalk, and Snap, whom all Gav-ruchka's abuse could never drive from his post, was

gambolling around them. Every day he accompanied me to the Gymnasium, and stationing himself by the gate waited patiently until school was dismissed. No friend less dear to him than my little sister could have induced him to abandon his post even for a moment.

Sacha ran to meet me as soon as I left the building, and then we both walked slowly toward the baron.

“Did you get a scolding the other day?” I asked before we reached the old gentleman. “How sorry I am that I went to the princess’s house! It was such a pity for you to get in disgrace on our account.”

“But I was n’t scolded, that is, not exactly. Daria Alexandrovna did say that — that —”

“That we should never set foot in her house again?” I said, laughing, for Sacha had paused for fear of hurting my feelings.

She nodded assent.

“I can’t say that I blame her. Visitors of our stamp must terrify the mistress of a house like hers. But how kind Arcadion Sémonovitch was to bring you here! We’re not likely to do any damage out of doors,—that’s one comfort,—unless we step on his feet.”

“Yes, was n’t it good of him? You’ve no idea how kind he is to me! Arcadion Sémonovitch, here is Dmitri, still blushing with shame for his exploits of the other day.”

“He was not to blame,” said the old nobleman, kindly offering me his hand; “it was the other young man, it seems to me. There he comes now!” he added, prudently placing himself out of harm’s way behind me. For Porphyre was rushing toward us with a radiant face. A moment more, and he had greeted our friends without the slightest embarrassment.

"I am very glad to see Snap again," said M. Békou-nine; "I had no idea that he would ever recover entirely. You must have taken great care of him, Dmitri Féodorovitch. He is a fine animal, and he does you great credit."

I told them of my dog's fidelity, Snap listening all the while, with his eyes riveted on my face as if he understood me — and I, for my part, have never doubted that dogs understand what is said to them, as well as, and even better than, many human beings, — and explained at the same time how Porphyre happened to come to Moscow. Snap was petted and caressed to his heart's content, and I could see that Arcadion Sémonovitch was disposed to regard my comrade with more favorable eyes. He finally invited both of us to take breakfast at a restaurant with him and Sacha.

Capiton Strodtmann passed just as we were stepping into the carriage, and an expression of admiration and envy was very apparent on his face when he saw the luxurious equipage. He was evidently much surprised to see me in such aristocratic company. Had he known how generous and loving the heart of my little sister was, he would have had much more reason to envy me.

Aside from a few blunders on Porphyre's part, such as upsetting a decanter of wine on the tablecloth, breaking several plates and glasses, and burning his tongue frightfully with a cup of hot chocolate, the breakfast passed off very pleasantly. After it was over, Sacha bade me a sorrowful farewell. The princess was to leave for the south of France the following day, and it was impossible to say when she would return to Russia.

I pause in my story to cast a hasty glance over the years that followed. They were marked by no event of

importance; the time seems to have glided by like a dream, transporting me gradually from childhood to the verge of manhood; conducting me, too, with stealthy steps to the gloomy cell in which these lines are penned. These pleasant reminiscences of bygone days have made me for a time forget the gloomy present. But what will be the end of all this? Shall I ever leave this prison-house with my honor completely vindicated? Who is the real culprit? Will he ever be discovered? Why am I imprisoned in his stead? Will any one ever know?

And Maëstro Népomuk, Serge, Porphyre, my other schoolmates, and my teachers — what do they think of this affair? What has become of my poor dog? Sometimes I fancy I hear, even through these massive walls, a lugubrious howl which I recognize as his. Poor faithful friend! what does he think of my desertion?

I am kept in solitary confinement; I see no one except the jailor who brings me my coarse food, and he never speaks to me.

Courage, Dmitri, courage! Let us return to the past, so I can forget my gloomy surroundings, and the clouds that enshroud the future.

I have only a vague recollection of the events of the last few years, however. Though I can distinctly recall even the most trifling incidents of my childhood, — the weather on such or such a day, entire conversations with my father and others, the exact appearance of such or such a spot in the surrounding country, a tune played on the guitar in the house of some acquaintance, and the faces of my earliest friends, — my last years at the Gymnasium seem void of incident. It seems to me that my

comrades and I have been undergoing such a rapid change that it is impossible to paint our portraits in any permanent colors. Who is this youth in shabby attire, who grows and grows as if he had no idea of ever stopping? It seems to me that I know his face, and yet I scarcely dare to assert that it is really I. What are his opinions concerning life and society and his surroundings? Does he possess a single idea in common with my former self? Yes; his love of music still predominates over all other sentiments; all nature breathes forth a melody to which his ear never tires of listening; and as the months and years transform the child into a shy and awkward youth, and then into a strong, robust young man, his dreamy nature undergoes no change. He still has the same difficulty in fixing his mind on material things; that ever-present  $x$  has lost none of its terrors.

He passes from the Second Class into the First, painfully and laboriously surmounting each step leading up to that terrible final examination of which he stands in such mortal dread. He plods grimly on, however; but music still retains her hold upon him, and if he devotes an hour to his studies, an irresistible power compels him to devote at least three times as long to his beloved art. The symphony is progressing; it is nearly finished now, and one of these days I intend to submit it to my master for criticism. What will he think of it? Is there really anything in Dmitri Térentieff's music? Is it worthy to have a place among the works of the great composers, or is it, alas! only the empty sound of a tinkling cymbal?

And this young man with calm thoughtful eyes and frank, honest face, — this young man who is always quiet, sincere, and composed, who is always at the head of his



class, and who excels in everything, as he once told Dmitri that he ought to do? It is my friend Serge. He has never passed through any rough and uncouth transition period, or been a prey to any unreasonable and absurd fancies. Resolved to succeed in order that he might not disappoint his father's hopes in regard to him, he has marched steadily and firmly on toward the appointed goal. How many wise counsels he has given me, — though never in a tone of offensive superiority! What a kindly interest he feels in everything that concerns me! We are as united in feeling as two brothers; anything that affects me affects him. He takes even more interest in my symphony than I do myself, I believe; and he guards the secret of my musical aspiration with jealous care. I confide my hopes to no one but him; and Serge would allow himself to be torn in pieces rather than betray my confidence.

This big fellow with a round ruddy face, whose growth suddenly ceased while he was only in the Second Class, is my old friend Porphyre. I hasten to add that it is only in height that he has ceased to grow. In breadth, he increases so rapidly that it almost seems as if one could see him grow. He will soon be broader than he is long; and in spite of his desperate efforts to keep them together, his garments, which are always too tight for him, burst open with every movement, and make him the laughing-stock of the school. He ought to diet himself, as I often tell him; but he has a remarkably good appetite, and he won't listen to me.

We still live together, and study at the same rough pine table. Occasionally a sudden desire to move about takes possession of us, and without saying a word, we spring up and wrestle with each other until one of us bites the

dust; then, refreshed by this interlude, we set to work again.

Poor Porphyre! as he grows older he seems to pay less and less attention to his personal appearance. Unkempt and untidy, with his boots always run down at the heel, he is the very type of a certain set of students; but he stands well in his classes, nevertheless. He is very intelligent; his teachers all like him; and he often obtains excellent marks when boys who consider themselves greatly his superiors are forced to hide their diminished heads.

Porphyre and Grichine are still unseparable, though they tease and tantalize each other as much as ever. Grichine persisted in his strange behavior at Dame Goltchov's table, and for a long time Porphyre and I were the only persons who would address a word to him. One day Porphyre determined to solve the mystery, and stealthily followed his friend, impelled doubtless by a grim desire to see a human being partake of such loathsome food.

Grichine, suspecting nothing, walked on, whistling blithely, until he reached a tumble-down hut in a narrow, dingy street. Grichine entered the hut, and Porphyre, who was close at his heels, peered through a crack in the door. And what did he see? A poor, half-naked, emaciated old man lying on a rude pallet, with several half-starved, hollow-eyed, pale-faced children crowding around him, all engaged in voraciously devouring the contents of the brown paper bag. How they smacked their lips over the scraps of fat! how eagerly they licked their fingers! how ardently they wished there had been more of it! And Grichine, brave fellow, stood and watched them with almost paternal satisfaction. He spoke encouraging words to them; he laughed and jested with them; and they, in turn, clung to

his garments and embraced him. They loved him devotedly, that was evident; and Grichine was so gay and affectionate in his manner toward them that big tears mounted to Porphyre's eyes, and he began to blubber, like the big calf that he is.

Grichine heard him, and ran to see what was the matter. He seemed overwhelmed with confusion when he found that his secret was discovered; but when Porphyre fell upon his neck, nearly smothering him in his embrace, and told him, in faltering accents, how greatly Grichine's depraved taste had troubled him, but how valiantly he had always defended him, Grichine laughed heartily.

"No, it was n't very pleasant to be ostracized, and to have people regard you as a sort of monster," he said frankly; "but, you see, I had nothing to give these poor creatures. It is all I can do to support my mother; and it made my heart ache to see the poor little brats crying for food. They're not fastidious, neither is the poor grandfather; and the stuff keeps them alive, after all."

The old grandfather was eloquent in his praises. He told how kind Grichine had been to them, how he never forgot them, and how he was always denying himself in order that he might have something to give to the little ones; but Grichine soon became tired of listening to these eulogiums, and dragged Porphyre away.

"But I've *seen* you eat fat at old Goltchov's," the latter said to him. "Is it possible that you like it?"

Grichine made a frightful grimace. "I'd rather swallow live serpents," he replied; "but I had to force myself to eat it. If I had n't, it would n't have seemed natural for me to take away the scraps."

Then he laughed.



GRICHINE AND HIS PROTÉGÉES.





"It is real funny to see the faces you all make!" he added, with a laugh; but Porphyre notices that there is a suspicious moisture in his friend's eyes, and he cannot say much himself,—he is too deeply moved.

He hurries home and tells me all about it. Poor Grichine! his kindness of heart and his courage touch me deeply. Serge too, hears the story, and soon the whole school know all about it. A subscription is started for our schoolmate's *protégés*; each student gives what he can, and a very nice little sum of money is raised. A meeting is held, and the money is formally presented to poor Grichine, who is overwhelmed with embarrassment, and Serge preaches us a very neat little sermon.

"Grichine has set us a most excellent example. Let us see that we follow it. The poorest among us has found one who is still poorer, upon whom to bestow his charity. He has denied himself; he has made all sorts of sacrifices, and subjected himself to the most cruel ridicule, in order to alleviate the sufferings of this old man and his children. Shall we be less generous? [*Cries of No! No! No!*] Then let us give, each one of us, every month, a stated amount, according to our means, a rouble, a grivenik, or even a kopeck, to support these poor people. Let them be regarded, henceforth, as wards of Saint-Vladimir; and may everlasting disgrace be our portion if we fail to rescue them from their misery!" (*Wild applause. The motion is carried unanimously.*)

Grichine is radiant; and everybody else is well pleased, for we are all fond of Grichine; and Porphyre is so proud of his friend that he can scarcely contain himself.

Capiton, who is rich, gives like all the others, but he does it with a rather contemptuous air. He grows more

and more conceited every day. He is one of the handsomest fellows in school, unquestionably. He is as tall as I am; his features are regular, his figure is admirably proportioned, and his attire irreproachable. There is no trouble about his neck and ears now, — he is the greatest of dandies. His jackets are the admiration and despair of his classmates; his short cane is a work of art; his white cap, — for he, too, is a First Class boy now — is immaculate, and the pearl horseshoe he wears in his scarf makes us wild with envy. A light down is visible on his upper lip. In short, Capiton is nothing more or less than a paragon, — not in his classes, however, for his marks are deplorable, and he gets a *zero* with appalling regularity.

But speaking of beards, he is not the only person who can boast of this adornment. I drag Porphyre to the window one morning, and examine him closely. Yes, there is a soft yellow down on his fat cheeks! Porphyre, too, has a beard! A fierce spirit of emulation seizes me. I shave every morning; I scratch my face cruelly, and cover it with strips of court plaster. If any one asks me what the matter is, I calmly reply, "Only a scratch, — I did it this morning while I was shaving." But too often I see, or fancy I see, doubt and amusement in my questioner's eyes; for in spite of all my efforts, my chin remains as smooth as a hen's egg. This fact makes me gloomy and morose, and I compose a funeral march that reduces Porphyre to the depths of despair when I play it to him.

Meanwhile the time for the final examination is approaching. It is the one topic of conversation; and even the most idle of our students set to work. I neglect my music; I even forget to watch the growth of an incipient mustache; I allow myself only five hours for sleep. The

chances of each and every student are eagerly discussed. Serge is sure to pass, and so is Porphyre. Capiton will fail, unquestionably. Platon Grégorov and I *may* pass, if we work, but there must be no more idling. We all study like mad, though the examination will not take place until the beginning of the next academic year.

One morning, about two months ago, I was a little late, and when I reached the Gymnasium, Gavruchka was just closing the door; but I sprang forward and just succeeded in getting inside before it was too late. All my papers fell to the ground; and as I was chasing the flying sheets, I saw Gavruchka slam the grated door directly in the face of Capiton, who had just made his appearance, panting and breathless. The latter entreated Gavruchka to let him in; but the janitor was inexorable, and Capiton, taking a gold imperial <sup>1</sup> from his pocket, held it out to him through the bars.

“Here, take this, and open the door,” he said insolently.

There was a profound silence. I turned and looked at Gavruchka. His face was distorted with rage. For an instant he seemed unable to move; then seizing the coin he flung it violently in Capiton's face.

“Wretch! how dare you offer me money?” he roared. “What do you take me for? Money! money to an old soldier like me! Clear out, you abominable cur, clear out, I say!”

He was nearly suffocated with rage. Capiton's face was livid. He darted a venomous glance at Gavruchka, then turned and strode angrily away. I stood for a moment as if petrified, for Gavruchka's distress pained me. The insult

<sup>1</sup> A gold coin worth about four dollars.

seemed to have cut him to the heart. I have never mentioned the unfortunate occurrence to any one. I am not even sure that Capiton knows I witnessed it. This much is certain, he has never once alluded to it in my presence.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE TRIAL.

I HAVE arrived at the end of my reminiscences. I have frankly and faithfully revealed my secret thoughts and motives, as well as my acts. I have forced myself to speak honestly and sincerely, but without anger, of those whose past conduct give me the right to call them my enemies. My confession has been a great resource to me during the depressing hours I have spent here; it has assisted me wonderfully in enduring the gloom of the dreary existence I have led for more than a month.

I told my teachers the truth on the morning of my arrest. I repeat it here to myself, face to face with my own conscience. Upon my word of honor, I am not responsible for Gavručka's injuries. I have not seen him since eight o'clock that evening, the hour when he refused me admission to the study hall. He seemed to be in perfect health when he closed the door behind me. I have no idea how he was injured. I know nothing, absolutely nothing of the joke that was played upon him in my name.

Though I have my suspicions in regard to the person who imitated my writing, and thus cast the odium of the crime on me, it does not behoove me to reveal them. The task of discovering the true culprit belongs to the authorities. I shall repeat once more what I have already said.



If they insult me by doubting my word, I am resolved to keep silence; I will not so lower myself as to argue the matter; I will not allow any one to doubt my word. Strong in the approval of my own conscience, I will bravely endure such punishment as they may see fit to inflict upon me. I can endure it much better innocent than guilty.

My father, my dear sister Sacha, my old friends, you would never have doubted me! You know — do you not? — that if I were guilty, I should be the first to admit it.

*8 P. M. Ten days later.* The first day of my trial is over. Nothing is yet decided, but what happiness I felt to-day! It is well to suffer, if our sufferings teach us to know and appreciate our friends. How I thank you all! When I heard your dear voices after the long, death-like silence of my prison cell, I could hardly restrain my tears. But I never once bowed my head under this unjust accusation! Never did I feel more proud or composed than at the hour when my only support and consolation were the approval of my own conscience, and the absolute certainty that my hands are unstained by this foul deed.

Poor old Gavruchka! who ever would have supposed that I was destined to suffer thus on your account? I bear him no ill-will for his past tyranny, — his misfortunes have blotted out all remembrance of that; and he, too, if he could regain consciousness, would gladly testify to my innocence, — I am sure of that. Who could have injured the poor old man so cruelly? Why must he remain silent, perhaps forever, when he may be the only person who can enlighten us?

This morning I was startled by the harsh grating of a key in the lock; and by the dim light that stole through

my tiny window, I saw the jailer enter my cell, accompanied by several soldiers.

I only took time to wash my face in the meagre supply of water the prison regulations give me both for drinking and toilet purposes, and to try and make my disordered garments a little more presentable; for I was still wearing those I had on at the time of my arrest, and the dampness of my cell and continual contact with my chains had not improved them. As I was carefully picking off some straws that clung to my caftan, a young soldier with a pleasant face and blue eyes, seeing that such untidiness was annoying to me, pulled a whisk-broom out of his haversack, and brushed me vigorously from head to foot. This kindly act moved me almost to tears. When one has been cut off from all intercourse with his fellows for a long time, a mere trifle makes a deep impression upon one. I felt my lips quiver as I thanked him. His companions said nothing, but no one opposed his charitable deed.

The bright sunlight almost blinded me as I approached the courtyard. Just as I set foot in it, a long wild howl made me start; and an animal that several guards had been vainly endeavoring to restrain burst from them, and came bounding toward me. It was Snap, my poor, faithful dog! And what a sorry condition he was in! so emaciated that his bones nearly protruded through his skin, and his once bright eyes were sadly dim! He licked my hands frantically; then, standing on his hind legs, he placed his forepaws upon my breast. Oh, how delighted he was to see me! My eyes grew moist; my heart throbbed wildly; and leaning forward, I imprinted a loving kiss upon the forehead of this faithful friend.

The soldiers seemed deeply touched.

"He has n't moved from here since you were put in prison," remarked one of the guards. "We've done everything we could to drive him away, but he always came straight back. If some of us had n't taken pity on you, and thrown you a few bones now and then, you would have been dead long ago, eh, old fellow?" he added compassionately.

A covered wagon was waiting at the door. I stepped into it, accompanied by a corporal and two soldiers. Snap sprang in after me, and crouched at my feet.

"Let him alone! The poor beast won't do any harm," said the corporal, stroking his big gray mustache.

We soon reached the court house, and alighted before its massive portals. My dog was evidently determined to follow me in; and fearing he would be ill-treated if he persisted, I took off my cloak and laid it on the ground. "Here, Snap, take care of it," I said to him in a tone of command; and he immediately stretched himself out beside it, and placed his right paw upon it. He would die rather than desert his post.

I was taken to the court-room, and conducted to the bench reserved for me.

The immense hall was crowded to suffocation; people were even sitting in the window-sills. A loud murmur was distinctly audible when I appeared; but there was a mist before my eyes, and at first I could not distinguish a single countenance in the sea of human faces. I sank into my seat almost fainting; but a fear of appearing cowardly revived me, and with a violent effort I straightened myself up and glanced around me.

I see Népomuk Raabzinsky in the court-room. He is



"IT WAS SNAP, MY POOR, FAITHFUL DOG!"





standing near the witness-stand, wrapped in his big black cloak. He waves his hand to me, and calls out, "Courage, my dear boy, courage!"

Near him stand Serge, Porphyre, and Grichine. Platon Grégorov, too, is here with a party of ladies. I see, too, several of our professors, our superintendent, with a look of profound sadness on his face, and M. Sarévine, sterner and more grim than ever; but I see all these familiar faces as if in a dream, and am by no means sure that all this is real,—that I am, indeed, a prisoner, and that all these persons are assembled here to see me tried.

The rasping voice of the bailiff rises, commanding silence in the court.

The judges are in their seats. The presiding judge is a venerable man of imposing appearance, with a long gray beard reaching nearly to his waist. On his breast glitters the Cross of Saint Ann. He casts a glance over the assemblage, and then gives orders for the proceedings to begin. After a long discussion a dozen jurors are chosen; a thirteenth is added in case one of the others should fall ill.

Then the priest, who has been standing to the left of the presiding judge, and just behind his chair, assumes his green stole, embroidered with gold, and administers the oath to the thirteen jurors, who immediately take their places in the jury-box.

The counsel for the prosecution rises. He is a very stern-looking man; and the glance he bestows on me when he speaks seems to indicate that the mere sight of me fills him with horror and loathing. I feel the hot blood mount to the very roots of my hair under his withering gaze; but I keep my eyes fixed full on his face until the conclusion of

his remarks. He relates all the facts connected with the affair; he lays great stress upon the death-warrant, written in my hand; he declares that there cannot be the slightest doubt that I am the culprit, and demands that the severest penalty of the law should be inflicted upon me.

The evident animosity of this stranger enrages me. I long to reply to him in scathing terms, and vehemently to assert my innocence; but that is impossible.

“Rise, prisoner,” said the presiding judge, solemnly, “and swear on the Holy Book to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” The priest advances toward me, holding up the Bible and the Crucifix; I take the prescribed oath in a firm voice, and reverently kiss the sacred image.

“What answer have you to make to this accusation?”

“The same answer I made before. I solemnly declare upon my word of honor, that I did not see Gavruchka after eight o’clock on the evening of the 14th of February. I swear it by this sacred emblem, and by the revered memory of my father. I have told the exact truth. I know nothing about this affair except what I heard on the morning of my arrest. I myself wrote nothing but a few lines of music on the sheet of paper the superintendent showed me. I never touched a hair of the janitor’s head, I swear it! I tell you so, once for all, but I will not allow any one to doubt my word. If you refuse to believe me, I shall say no more. I have no proofs to give you. Either believe me, or cease to question me; for by the Holy Virgin of Kasan, I swear I will answer no further questions.”

There was quite a commotion in the court-room. “Prisoner,” said the presiding judge, severely, “you are

injuring yourself by your vehemence. It is your duty to answer all questions put to you, and to give us all the assistance possible, in order that justice may be done."

"I desire that much more ardently than any person present. If I had committed the crime with which I am charged, I should be the first to admit my guilt."

The judge frowned. "Summon the witnesses," he said curtly.

The first person to testify is Apollon Samitine, the policeman. He is a very tall man, and looks as stiff as a ramrod in his uniform. His honest face, which is as ruddy in hue as the collar of his tunic, does not indicate much intelligence, and he answers the questions put to him like an automaton. I can see that when Apollon Samitine once gets an idea into his head, it is not easy to dislodge it. He repeats the statements previously made. He saw me enter the Gymnasium about eight o'clock; at midnight he saw me emerge from it, wrapped in a big cloak, and with the lower part of my face covered with a dark muffler.

By the judge's orders I am arrayed in this manner, and the white cap worn by all the First Class boys is placed on my head. Apollon identifies me. He is positive, now, that I am the person he saw leaving the Gymnasium about midnight.

"Prisoner, what have you to say in answer to these statements?"

"I was not at the Gymnasium. I spent the evening at a concert, so I am not the person he saw leaving the building."

"Who were the two young men that were with you when you left the Gymnasium at midnight?" asked the prosecuting attorney abruptly, after a short silence.

I felt an angry flush overspread my face, and was about to make a wrathful reply; but suddenly checked myself, and leaning back in my seat, I folded my arms upon my breast.

“Did you hear my question, prisoner? Who were those persons?”

And as I still remained silent, —

“Was he not one of them?” he persisted, in a voice of thunder, pointing to Porphyre.

This was too much.

“Porphyre Agathonovitch was not with me at the concert,” I answered scornfully. “Ask him where he spent his evening, if you want to know. He is no more of a liar than I am. He will tell you without any circumlocution.”

“Everyone knows perfectly well already,” cried Porphyre, in spite of the officers’ endeavors to silence him. “I was kept in prison two days, but old Ivan had no difficulty in proving that I was asleep by his stove from eight o’clock until one that night, and —”

They silenced him at last by dragging him toward the door; but from my seat I could not see whether they succeeded in pulling him out of the room or not.

“You had accomplices,” said the presiding judge. “Name them.”

“I could n’t have had accomplices in a crime I never committed.” Then, being thoroughly exasperated, I rashly add, —

“Besides, even if I had, I would n’t be base enough to betray them.”

The judge gave me a stern glance.

“Take care, young man,” he said, with an arrogance that

made my blood boil in my veins; such insolence does not become a prisoner, especially when a lad of your age is addressing a man of my years. Bring in the next witness."

I nurse my wrath in silence while the next witness — the doorkeeper at the Porte-Dorée — gives her testimony. She is a nervous, timid woman of an uncertain age, and is evidently greatly awed by her surroundings. She begins by stoutly declaring that she always sees every person who enters the hall, and that she never fails to notice each individual's face and clothing; still, she might fail to see a person if the night was dark, and the person who presented himself at the window was very tall and kept his face in the shadow. This was not the case with this young man, for she had often noticed him and knew him very well by sight. He often attended the concerts, and she knew him,— well, in the first place, because — because he was not a person to pass unnoticed (*great hilarity*), and because he only paid one fourth of the usual price of admission on account of his student's cap; but on the evening referred to, she was sure that no one purchased a fourth-rate ticket. If she had seen me, she would certainly have remembered it, and as she did not see me, I certainly was not there. Questioned more closely, she branched out into all sorts of topics foreign to the subject under discussion; she weeps and maunders; but her testimony evidently confirms the belief that I did not attend the concert that evening.

"Did you purchase a fourth-rate ticket at this concert?" inquires the presiding judge, a little ironically.

"No, sir; I know that what I am going to say will sound highly improbable: but some strange freak of fancy caused me to wear a fur cap instead of my school cap that evening, so I paid the full price of admission."



I can see that this answer injures me very considerably in public estimation. The attorney for the prosecution smiles meaningly, and the doorkeeper is dismissed from the witness stand, where she seems likely to prose on forever.

Maëstro Népomuk is the next witness examined. He speaks of me in the highest terms; and though I am far from worthy of such a tribute of esteem, it touches me deeply, and I am obliged to bow my head to conceal my emotion. He did not see me on the evening referred to. No one saw me. I seem to have been as invisible to mortal sight as if I had worn the magic ring of the fable. True, I spoke to the janitor of the next house on returning home, but it was after midnight, so that proves nothing.

My teachers now testify. They say I am studious and good-tempered; that I am universally regarded as a peaceably-disposed, honest lad, and the only fault they have had to find with me is that I am rather absent-minded, and too prone to indulge in day dreams; that they have never seen me violently angry, and that I am too proud to lie. My reputation at the Gymnasium is excellent. True, I have often been known to ridicule the janitor, and have slight altercations with him; but this has also been the case with most of the pupils of the Gymnasium. My professors, however, without exception, identify the handwriting on the sheet of music-paper as mine.

Several of my fellow-students are now brought forward. Serge testifies with a friendly warmth of manner that moves me deeply. He is as sure of me as he is of himself, and he would have to see me pen that death-warrant with his own eyes to be convinced of my guilt, since I deny it. My simple word has more weight with him than

the strongest oath. He respects and honors me as deeply as he loves me, and he will always believe in my innocence. When he is cross-examined, he replies that the handwriting strongly resembles mine, but as I declare that it is not mine, he is sure that it is only an imitation.

The superintendent and assistant superintendent testify in their turn. When they were hastily summoned at dawn by one of the char-boys, they found the janitor in his little room, bent almost double, and to all appearance dead. The assistant superintendent instantly recognized my handwriting on the crumpled paper that was lying on the floor near the unfortunate man; and he could hardly doubt that I was the perpetrator of this most reprehensible practical joke, and the testimony of the policeman had only strengthened this unpleasant conviction. In all other respects they both did me ample justice, and declared that I had always been a remarkably frank and honest boy. Kind-hearted M. Pérevsky even added, with great feeling, that he would not have supposed me capable of a cruel or even culpable act. Then addressing himself to me, he implored me to tell the truth, and no longer persist in the unfortunate course impulsively adopted in the moment of terror that immediately followed discovery.

I cannot feel offended with him. I only shake my head sadly.

"I did not do it, Ivan Alexandrovitch, I swear I did not!" I exclaim in a voice that trembles, in spite of all my efforts; for his evident grief pains me.

The Gymnasium physician gives his testimony. He was summoned at seven o'clock in the morning. The comatose condition in which he found the janitor indicated that the cerebral congestion with which he was suffering had at-

tacked him eight or ten hours before, or between nine and eleven o'clock in the evening; Gavručka's limbs were rigid, his face much swollen, and his respiration and pulse scarcely perceptible. There were no signs of violence. The attack of apoplexy had been brought on, perhaps by a paroxysm of rage rather than terror, caused by the brutal threat against him; in fact, the irascible disposition of the victim and his intemperate habits rendered this supposition extremely probable. The untiring medical attention bestowed upon him had averted any immediate danger: but his prostration was still very great; his eyes remained glassy, his sight and hearing were much impaired, if not entirely destroyed; and his attempts to speak were limited to a few incoherent words.

"If he ever rallies, which is by no means certain," says the doctor, in conclusion, "there is good reason to fear that his recovery will be but partial."

Experts then examine the death-warrant, as well as my note-books, and disagree in the most lively manner. Some declare that the handwriting is the same; others cannot detect the slightest resemblance. They quarrel and contradict each other; their voices rise higher and higher. They seem to be on the point of tearing each other's eyes out, when the presiding magistrate curtly dismisses them.

Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann is summoned; but he fails to respond, and an officer of the court is sent out in search of him.

But the short winter's day is fast drawing to a close. The court adjourns; the crowd rush out, and I am taken back to my cell.

My dog was still guarding my cloak, and when I reached

the prison, I again intrusted the garment to his care, in order to quiet his troubled heart. It will be cold to-night without my cloak, but my faithful friend has suffered long for me; I can certainly shiver a little for his sake.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### EXTRACT FROM THE MOSCOW CHRONICLE.

WE resume this morning our report of the exciting trial now going on in our city. At an early hour the court house was besieged by an immense throng of our townspeople, all resolved to secure a place in the court-room, or suffocate in the attempt.

The character of the assemblage was much the same as that of yesterday, — a great many ladies, and a large number of students from the University, as well as from the various colleges and gymnasia, being present.

At eight o'clock precisely the judges took their seats, and the prisoner was brought in immediately afterwards.

We mentioned in our issue of yesterday the very favorable impression made upon those present by young Térentieff. His youth, the clearness and frankness of his blue eyes, his tall and admirably developed form, and above all, the expression of honesty and integrity imprinted upon his features, instantly enlisted the sympathies of the public in his behalf, as was the case yesterday.

“Poor young man! I hope he will be acquitted!” — “Most assuredly that lad never told a falsehood or injured any one in his life.” — “Don't you think he resembles Prince D——?” — “Oh, no, my dear, he looks more like



Count W——. Don't you see he has the same broad forehead and straight nose." — "I think a fellow with a form like that ought to be acquitted at once. It's a positive pleasure to see a sturdy young giant like that after the puny dwarfs modern education gives us."

These remarks and many of a like nature were exchanged in the court-room. Térentieff's friends crowded around the dock to shake hands with him; and everybody was talking about the wonderful fidelity displayed by the prisoner's dog, who has remained at the gate of the prison ever since his master entered it.

Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann, the principal witness for the prosecution, was summoned. Several minutes passed, but he failed to appear. A messenger dispatched to his father's residence returned with the announcement that he was not at home, but was supposed to be somewhere in the court-room.

He could not be found, however; so the attorney for the prosecution arose, and in his usual spirited and masterly style proceeded to sum up the testimony against the prisoner.

He spoke first of Térentieff's antecedents. He alluded to the difficulty the prisoner had had with the unfortunate janitor, soon after his arrival in Moscow, — an arrival, too, which was attended with many circumstances of a suspicious nature. The accused had been of an unusually reserved and taciturn disposition from childhood. He had very few friends. He had none of the frank gayety natural to lads of his age; in regard to all matters connected with himself he had always been strangely reticent. His light had often been seen burning until a late hour of the night. How was he employed? Was he so very far advanced in

his studies? No, he was a young man of fair ability, but not a particularly ambitious student, if the statements of his teachers could be relied upon. His physical strength was remarkable. Seeing him, it was very easy for any one to understand how he had succeeded in overpowering an inoffensive old man. The mere sight of such an adversary was enough to strike terror to the heart of his aged and infirm victim, enfeebled both in mind and body by the severe wounds he had received while defending his country. Besides, the prisoner had taken good care to apprise the unfortunate man of his impending doom; and this threat, written by the prisoner's own hand, now formed one of the most conclusive proofs of his guilt. (*The sentence of death was here circulated among the jurors, together with other specimens of the prisoner's handwriting, and the jurors were seen to shake their heads ominously. Intense excitement prevailed in the hall.*) This unfortunate youth, a prey to the most dangerous and perverse instincts, should, in the interests of society, be separated from the upright and honorable young men to whom his very presence is an insult. Perhaps in the gloomy depths of a Siberian mine a spirit of repentance may be awakened in his soul, and purify his now corrupt heart.

The speaker concluded by asking that the severest penalty of the law be imposed upon the prisoner.

The presiding judge then asked the accused if he had anything to say in his defence, and even urged the prisoner to confess his guilt, so that an appeal to the mercy of the jurors would be possible.

But Téréntieff shook his head energetically.

"I am not guilty," he exclaimed passionately, "You might as well send the prosecuting attorney to Siberia as

me; I had nothing more to do with the crime of which I am accused than he had."

He was advised to be silent. It was evident that his violent manner was making an unfortunate impression upon the jury.

"Once more I will ask if Witness Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann is present?" said the judge. Then after a long silence, he added: "The counsel for the defence will now be heard." But just as that gentleman arose to speak, there was quite a commotion in the dense throng, caused by some officers of the court, who were evidently trying to open a way through the crowd for another witness, who wished to testify.

The new-comer proved to be a beautiful young girl with a delicate face framed with rich masses of brown hair, a superb complexion, and large dark eyes that shone like stars.

On seeing her, the prisoner hastily sprang to his feet, uttering a smothered exclamation. He was compelled to reseat himself; but every one could see that he was greatly agitated.

"Your name, my child?" asked the presiding judge gently, for the sudden and unexpected appearance of this vision of youthful loveliness was evidently as great a surprise to him as to the rest of the assemblage.

"Alexandra Féodorovna, adopted daughter of the late Fédor Illitch Térentieff, father of the prisoner," responded the new witness, in a clear and musical voice.

"Alexandra Féodorovna, swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The witness took the required oath in a modest and reverent manner.

"Now what have you to say, Alexandra Féodorovna?"

“I attended the concert at the Porte Dorée on the evening of the 14th of February. [*Great excitement in the courtroom.*] I arrived there at eight o'clock, in company with my old friend, Prince Arcadion Sémonovitch Békounine, who is ready to confirm my statements. About quarter past eight, while sitting beside that gentleman in Box No. 10, in the first tier, I happened to glance up at the gallery, and at that very moment I saw Dmitri Fédorovitch, my adopted brother, enter. Though I had not seen him for two years, — which I spent in Southern Europe, — I recognized him instantly, but took up my opera-glass to satisfy myself beyond a doubt that it was really he. I called Arcadion Sémonovitch's attention to my brother's presence, and he, too, recognized him. On entering, Dmitri Fédorovitch took a seat in the first row, removed his hat, rested his elbow on the balustrade and his chin upon his hand. He sat where the light of the chandelier fell full upon him, and he did not leave his place until the close of the concert. One might have taken him for a statue; and if I had not known his passion for music, his immobility would have alarmed me. Even during the intermission, when everybody else was talking and moving about, he remained motionless in his seat. Prince Békounine and I both laughed about it, and finally we made a wager, he, that Dmitri would move; I, that he would not. I won. The concert ended at midnight, and my brother immediately rose and left the hall. I hoped to see him at the door as we went out; but did not, nor have I had any opportunity to see him since, for my godfather, as I call Prince Békounine, was taken very ill the next day, and my whole time and attention have been devoted to nursing him. It was through yesterda . . .









papers that we first heard of my beloved brother's trying position. Of course I came here as soon as possible to tell you the whole truth."

The fair speaker paused, overcome with emotion, and her melodious voice had scarcely ceased, when a storm of applause burst from the audience; loud shouts of "Three Cheers for Téréntieff! Hurrah! he is innocent! he is innocent!" resounded on every side. In vain the officers of the court, and even the judges, endeavored to restore order. It was one of those outbursts of enthusiasm that cannot be repressed, and tears streamed from many eyes. Every one seemed to experience a feeling of intense relief at the discovery of the prisoner's innocence. Every one applauded wildly; and the accused, who had borne himself so courageously up to that time, seemed completely overcome, and buried his face in his hands.

In the midst of the general uproar, a messenger approached the presiding judge and handed him a sealed letter. The justice hastily tore it open, and glanced at the contents, then quickly rose from his seat. The confusion subsided, as if by magic; one could have heard a pin drop, so intense was the stillness. In a voice that trembled with emotion, the judge, turning to the prisoner, said, —

"Look up, Dmitri Fédorovitch; assuredly you have no cause to bow your head. Even if your sister's testimony had not exonerated you, we should not have failed to discover the truth. Listen, all you who are here present, and unite with me in testifying our respect and sympathy for this noble young man, who has suffered so undeservedly."

Then he read in a clear, ringing voice the following letter: —

TO DMITRI TÉRENTIEFF'S JUDGES :

When this letter is handed to you, I shall be far away. I can endure my remorse no longer. Dmitri Fédorovitch is not guilty of the assault imputed to him ; it was I, Capiton Karlovitch Strodtmann, who planned and executed the entire affair.

It is useless to dwell upon the circumstances that first excited my animosity against my fellow student. It is enough for me to confess that I hated him even before I knew him, and for the basest of reasons, — that is, because I believed I had been deprived through him of an inheritance upon which I had counted from childhood.

How this feeling of avarice could have gained such a hold upon me I do not know ; but I detested Dmitri from the moment of our first meeting, and made no secret of the fact, as my classmates will testify.

Dmitri himself asked me the reason of my evident dislike early in our acquaintance ; but I gave him no satisfaction. Every day I allowed my vindictive feelings to gain a stronger and stronger hold upon me ; I racked my brain to devise new means of annoying and wounding him. His self-control exasperated me ; I longed to see him humiliated ; and though it delighted me to know that he was poor, it irritated me almost beyond endurance to see that he was liked and respected by his fellow students.

I blush to think of the depths to which I allowed my hatred and jealousy to degrade me. Ask Térentieff what occurred on the ice on the occasion of Count Brovsky's fête ? If he despises me as I deserve, he will tell you. Shortly after that eventful day, I made some slight advances to Dmitri. I hoped he was ignorant of my baseness ; but he repulsed me. I certainly deserved it ; and yet this repulse decided me. I have no right to reproach him ; but if he had been more kind, I might have confessed my fault and striven to make amends. Instead of

that, from that time on, hypocrisy was added to my other crimes.

Though I hated him with a deadly hatred, I praised him upon all occasions; and if I detected surprise or contempt in his look at such times, I only became more enthusiastic in my eulogiums. I suspected him of having betrayed me to his most intimate friend, Serge Arcadiévitch Kratkine, and though I have since learned that I was mistaken, the thought appalled me.

Dmitri and Serge were both universally esteemed in the college, so I hated them both almost equally. It is hard to confess one's self governed by such base sentiments; but it is the only reparation I can make, and I will not allow cowardice to deter me now.

There had been a feud between me and the janitor for a long time. I had been one of his worst tormentors ever since I entered Saint-Vladimir; I knew the superstitious terrors of which the unfortunate man was the victim, — terrors caused, to a great extent, by his indulgence in spirituous liquors; and after a quarrel of which Téreentieff, to my great annoyance, chanced to be a witness, I resolved to have my revenge upon Gavruchka by means of a practical joke that would frighten him nearly out of his senses.

Alas! I little suspected how disastrous the consequences of this joke would prove!

I resolved to carry my scheme into execution that very evening. Chance, or rather a most dishonorable act on my part, put me in possession of one of Dmitri's papers, and the idea of casting the odium of the affair upon him in case it was discovered suddenly occurred to me. I took the paper home, and after spending an hour or two in imitating his writing, I wrote the pretended death-warrant on the other side of the paper.

About half past ten o'clock, I crept stealthily out of my father's house, and accompanied by two youths I happened to see loafing about the street, ready for any kind of deviltry, I

went to the college and rang the janitor's bell. I had enveloped myself in a large cloak, and tied a big comforter about the lower part of my face.

Suddenly aroused from his first nap, Gavručka was still half asleep when he opened the door. Without a word, I turned the light of my lantern full upon him; then saying, "In the name of the law!" in sepulchral tones, I stalked into the janitor's room, followed by my accomplices.

The old man was now thoroughly frightened, and his terror increased when I proceeded to lock the door. I then told him that the students of Saint-Vladimir, tired of his tyranny, had resolved upon his death; I next read the death-warrant, and while he was listening to it, trembling and half crazed with fear, I made a signal to my assistants.

They seized the old man by the elbows, and compelled him to kneel in front of the table. One of them then blindfolded him. He remained perfectly motionless,—like an ox in the shambles,—and for a moment I fully realized the enormity of the deed I was committing; but stifling the admonitions of conscience, I said, in hollow tones, —

"Gavručka, commend your soul to God, for your last hour has come!"

As I concluded, I dropped upon the back of his neck a tightly-twisted towel, which I had previously dipped in ice-cold water.

A few seconds passed in unbroken silence. As the wet towel touched his neck, the old man uttered such a deep, lugubrious groan that I shuddered with fear; but conquering the feeling, with a loud laugh, which my companions echoed, I tore the bandage from his eyes.

Imagine our horror when we saw that the unfortunate man had become unconscious! All our efforts to restore him proving fruitless, we felt certain that he was dead; and the idea filled us with such frantic terror that we resolved to flee.



My companions did not know my name, nor had they seen my face. I had given each of them a gold coin, and promised them some fun; but their sole object in accompanying me having been amusement, they were all the more horrified at the terrible consequences of our escapade, and I had very little trouble in making them solemnly swear to keep the affair a secret.

We stole noiselessly out; I parted with my companions at the first street-corner, and succeeded in re-entering my father's house unobserved.

Then, and not until then, did I discover that the pretended death-warrant had been left in the janitor's room. In my terror, an infamous idea suggested itself to my mind. If the writing on the paper was recognized as that of Téréntieff, I was saved. If he had penned the death-warrant, it was only natural to suppose that his had been the hand that carried it into execution.

You know the rest,—at least, you know that I yielded to the temptation; but you do not know what I have suffered during the forty days of my fellow-student's imprisonment. Since I met your searching eyes, Dmitri, while I was giving my testimony in the superintendent's office, and read in them the scorn and contempt I so richly deserved; since I have known that you were convinced of my guilt, and that your generosity alone prevented you from charging me with my crime,—my anguish and remorse have been well-nigh intolerable. You, of course, must have suffered terribly while in prison, covered with unmerited disgrace, suspected by every one, and perhaps ill-treated; but if you knew what one suffers when one is guilty, you would forgive me. Indeed, I have been so wretched that I could almost forgive myself.

Again and again during this trying time I have been on the point of throwing myself at the president's feet and confessing all; but a feeling of shame deterred me.

Oh, the miserable nights I have passed, writhing and groaning under my burden of guilt and cowardice! What would I not have given to be able to hold up my head as you did! And when I heard your friends Serge and Grichine, and Platon and even poor Porphyre proclaim their faith in you, it seemed to me I was being scourged with red-hot irons.

The days dragged by; an incident occurred that at last conquered me, — an incident that many persons might consider trivial. I saw your half-starved dog waiting for you at the door of your prison, and the poor dumb brute shamed me with his fidelity, and showed me what course to pursue.

I see myself in my true character now; I realize the baseness, the depravity, the ignoble nature of the sentiments that have always governed me.

I ask your forgiveness, here, publicly; I know you are too generous not to grant me your compassion.

My father signs this letter with me. At my request, he will see that it is delivered without delay. I leave Moscow this very hour. Perhaps on some distant battle-field Heaven will grant me an opportunity to retrieve my honor, and atone for my crime.

CAPITON KARLOVITCH STRODTMANN.

Witnesses: -

KARL STRODTMANN,

PETER SMALT, *Servant in the family of Karl Strodtmann.*

The reading of this long letter created the wildest excitement in the court-room; and when the venerable judge solemnly declared Térentieff innocent of any connection with the crime, the entire audience applauded vociferously.

The presiding judge added a few impressive remarks upon the folly of these practical jokes, which are often so appalling in their consequences. Strodtmann's punishment had been severe, but how cowardly and disgraceful

his conduct had been! His fate should be a warning to the many young men present.

Térentieff, too deeply moved to speak, sat with his face buried in his hands during the entire perusal of the letter.

When the judge warmly congratulated the young man, the applause burst out afresh, and he was the recipient of a genuine ovation as he was borne from the court-room in triumph by his classmates. He subsequently left the court house in company with his adopted sister and illustrious friend, Maëstro Népomuk Raabzinsky.

In behalf of the Press of our city, we sincerely congratulate Dmitri Féodorovitch Térentieff upon the fortitude and courage he displayed during this trying ordeal, and upon the fortunate termination of the trial.

## CHAPTER XX.

### EIGHT YEARS AFTERWARD.

CHANCING to be alone yesterday, I set to work to hunt up a certain fugue by Father Bach, which Sacha unjustly accuses me of having imitated in a page I have just written. Wishing to convince her of her mistake, I rummaged through a big pile of dusty papers, and happened upon these reminiscences, written under such painful circumstances.

How vividly they recall bygone days! I live over again in fancy each of those trying moments. How I suffered in that grim old Moscow prison! How its very walls seemed to whisper of iniquity and oppression! When one is sixteen, one rebels against injustice with one's whole soul; one longs to blot out such an outrage upon humanity; one suffers with all who suffer here below; but when one is himself the victim, how frantic one becomes! I remember well that I regarded my judges, my jailers, and in fact all mankind, as so many monsters. The idea that a denial on my part was not sufficient to establish my innocence, made me frantic with rage. It seemed to me that people ought to give me the benefit of the doubt until my guilt was proved beyond all question; and I rebelled at the idea of being treated as a criminal when I knew I was not a criminal.

Sacha found me absorbed in the perusal of these reminiscences; she glanced over them with me, and when we had finished them, she said, —

“The narrative is incomplete, Dmitri. Put your musical instruments aside. I am not going to allow you to touch them again until you have finished this story of our lives. Come, here’s a good pen and a quire of paper, and our father’s big armchair holds out its arms invitingly to you! To work, to work! there is not much more to say, but I’m going to lock up the organ, and hide your violin, until you shall have finished your task.”

Surrounded by my dear friends and leaning on my master’s arm, I left the court house like one in a dream. So many conflicting emotions had quite overpowered me. Never had I experienced such astonishment as when I saw Sacha suddenly appear in the court-room; but how perfectly natural it seemed that I should owe the vindication of my honor to her! Then, too, Capiton’s letter grieved me deeply. His reproach to me for having received his advances so coldly pierced me to the heart! How ardently I wished now that I had freely forgiven him, instead of making a pharisaical parade of my virtue. If I had been more willing to forget my grievances, doubtless all this would never have happened. The poor janitor was out of danger, it is true, but his entire recovery was a long way off. Having nearly lost his memory, his position became purely honorary. A room in the Gymnasium was allotted to him, and another old soldier took possession of the lodge, where Gavručka sometimes went to quarrel with him, as he had done with the pupils in years gone by.



As for Capiton, if I had not held myself so obstinately aloof from him, he would doubtless have become a different boy; this most disastrous practical joke might never have been played upon Gavruchka; and instead of being compelled to exile himself in consequence of it, he might have become a happy and honored member of our little circle. Serge felt exactly as I did about this matter, as he told me afterward. This passage in our fellow-student's letter grieved him also, and he, too, could not forgive himself for his hardness of heart. I thought of my father, who was always so kind and good and truly charitable, and said to myself that if he had been in my place, he would have acted very differently.

And yet an intense joy pervaded my entire being. It was my dear Sacha who had saved me! How can I describe my feelings when she suddenly appeared in the midst of that excited throng and her pure voice was heard speaking in her brother's defence. I can see her still as she stood there, with a ray of sunshine playing around her pretty head and encircling it with a sort of halo. She was so young and yet so composed; and she spoke with such manifest sincerity, that she won the respect of each and every person present, and to me she seemed nothing less than a guardian angel.

I made a resolution then and there. Neither ambition nor self-love should be my incentive henceforth. If I should ever again aspire to become a distinguished man, it would be to render myself worthy of Sacha, my dear, noble-hearted little darling.

When I regained consciousness, so to speak, I found myself in the street with her and Arcadion Sémonovitch, who had accompanied her to the court-room, though he

had only partially recovered from his illness. Need I say that my faithful Porphyre, stolid alike in prosperity and adversity, was also with us?

I confess that I shrank from the thought of again presenting myself before Mme. Lebanoff; so my relief was great when Sacha told me, on our way to the Boulevard Tverskoï, that the princess was not in Moscow. My heart felt much lighter, and it was with sincere joy that I followed her into the drawing-room. All the furniture was carefully covered, and it was a pleasant-faced, gray-haired woman, instead of those tall, insolent footmen, who opened the door for us, — a change that pleased me very much, by the way.

“Sacha, my dear, I will leave you with your young friends for a while,” remarked Baron Békounine. “You know how busy I am just now, so you must tell them the reason we have decided to prolong our stay in Moscow. *Au revoir*, young gentlemen! We will dine together by and by, and drink a glass of champagne in Dmitri’s honor.”

After the old gentleman’s departure, we seated ourselves around the big fire that was blazing on the hearth; my good dog Snap stretched himself out at my feet with a low growl of profound satisfaction, and we were ready to listen.

“True, Mitia, you know nothing about the present state of affairs,” exclaimed Sacha. “Well, Mme. Lebanoff has married again. She will never return to Russia. Indeed, it is to effect a sale of all her property that Arcadion Sémonovitch is here now.”

“Mme. Lebanoff has married again!” I exclaimed. “Then what will become of you, Sacha?”

“Of me? Oh, I’ve become what I was before, — the Sacha of former years, who can boast of no friend but Dmitri.”

“Explain, I beg of you!” I cry, both alarmed and delighted.

Porphyre’s eyes were stretched to their widest extent.

“Well, about a year ago we went to Florence to spend the winter,” began Sacha. “A heavy cold kept me a prisoner in my room for about a fortnight; and when I at last came downstairs to dine with Arcadion Sémonovitch and my godmother, — you know the princess always liked me to call her that, — I found her entertaining a gentleman I had never seen before, but to whom I instantly took a strong dislike.

“He was a stout, dark-complexioned man, about thirty years old, I should say, and decked out in more jewelry than I had ever seen a man wear before. He was chatting very gayly with Daria Alexandrovna; but when I entered the room, his eyes grew cold and stern, though he continued to smile. It may have been only fancy, but it seemed to me that there was something rather unnatural in the way he displayed his teeth, which were as white and even as pearls.

“‘Don’t look so astonished, my dear count; this is only my little Sacha, the daughter I’ve so often told you about,’ remarked the princess.

“‘Your daughter? — impossible! Oh, no; I protest, my dear princess — with that complexion and those eyes? There is certainly nothing about this young person to remind one of the beautiful star of the North who has come to illumine our southern skies with her radiance.’

“‘Fi, fi, count!’ exclaimed the princess. ‘Sacha,

dear, come here. This is Count Ottavio Luzzi-Ferrati, one of my most esteemed friends. What! neither of you offer to shake hands? Understand once for all that I absolutely insist upon your being the best of friends!’

“I extended my hand to the count, though rather ungraciously, I fear, and he made a movement as if he were about to touch it with his lips, after the Italian fashion; but I hastily withdrew it.

“‘The young lady is a little shy,’ he said, with a laugh that had a false ring in it; ‘but that does n’t matter. Everything connected with you is dear to me, *cara amica.*’

“The count’s manner displeased me so much that I turned my back on him, and picking up a book, walked into the adjoining room, which was separated from this merely by a portière; but for some inexplicable reason I found it impossible to fix my attention on my reading. Count Ottavio’s voice — though it may have been sweetest music to the ears of the fair Florentines — excited in me a sort of nervous irritation that I could not suppress.

“‘She has a rather depressed, or perhaps, to speak more correctly, a rather sullen air,’ remarked the count, in subdued tones. ‘Yes, sullen is exactly the word for it. But when a young girl is not pretty, and has been reared out of charity, she ought to make herself more agreeable. What do you intend to do with the poor child?’

“‘I don’t know what you mean, count,’ replied Mme. Lebanoff, dryly. ‘Besides, the opinion you have formed of Sacha surprises me. She is generally considered a very charming girl.’

“I am only repeating what *they* said, you understand, Mitia,” laughed Sacha.

“Yes, yes; go on,” I cried, and Porphyre signifying the same desire by a grunt, Sacha continued, —

“‘How can one help being blind to all save you, bright star of the North?’ exclaimed the count, sentimentally; and as he began to praise the golden hair and blue eyes of his star of the North, I was forgotten.

“Of course I was perfectly well aware that I had been reared out of charity, first by your father and you, Dmitri, and afterwards by the princess; but when I heard this stranger state the fact in such an insolent way I trembled with rage and indignation. You know by experience that my disposition has never been remarkable for its sweetness. There is nothing dove-like about me. My temples throbbed almost to bursting. I felt as if I should suffocate. Making my escape by another door, I rushed up to my own room, and throwing myself on the bed, began to weep bitterly. Oh, how humiliated and wretched I felt! and not altogether on my own account. Oh, no! I almost knew what was going to happen, and I felt sure that this man was not worthy of my dear godmother.

“When the dinner hour came, I told the maid that my head ached too badly for me to eat anything,— which was the truth, — and I remained in my own room.

“Soon some one rapped at my door. It was Arcadion Sémonovitch, who had come to ask how I felt. He must have seen that I had been weeping, for he stroked my hair gently, murmuring, ‘Poor child! poor child!’ so tenderly that my tears burst forth afresh.

“He sighed heavily, and seated himself by the fire without saying a word, and we spent the evening together in gloomy silence.





SACHA INTRODUCED TO COUNT OTTAVIO.



“Soon there could be no doubt that a great change was at hand. The count might almost be said to be a member of the household already, for he was always there, flattering the princess, paying her the most assiduous attentions, repeating poetry to her, and entertaining her with impromptu witticisms, composed with care in his leisure moments, it seemed to me. I could not accustom myself to his presence, nor overcome the distrust and aversion he inspired in me; neither could I avoid seeing him.

“Daria Alexandrovna soon perceived how greatly I disliked him, and endeavored both by arguments and railery to change the opinion I had formed of him; but she soon discovered that this was only a waste of time. Then I had the grief and mortification of noticing a marked change in her manner toward me. She seemed to become less and less fond of me, and more and more sensible of my many faults. All this wounded me deeply, especially as her altered manner was plainly due to the count’s influence. How different my life became! The princess, who had formerly been so kind and indulgent, was now petulant and hard to please; she reprimanded me severely for the slightest fault, and was always sending me to my governess, instead of keeping me with her, as she had been in the habit of doing. I came to the conclusion that she had ceased to care for me, and this made me so unhappy that I displeased her more and more by my sad and dejected manner.

“I seemed doomed to appear to the worst possible advantage in the count’s presence. He overwhelmed me with protestations of friendly regard, but at the same time wounded me deeply by his insinuations. He was

constantly reminding me of Mme. Lebanoff's goodness and charity, and invariably spoke of her as '*your* benefactress,' all the while showing by his manner that he considered me the most ungrateful of creatures.

"As if it were necessary for this stranger to remind me of what I owed to my godmother!

"When he spoke in this way, I seemed to turn to ice. At such times nothing on earth could have induced me to manifest the slightest affection for the princess; and yet I loved her devotedly.

"At last, one evening she called me into her room.

"'I wish to speak to you, Sacha,' she said gravely. 'I am about to marry. I think you will have no difficulty in guessing who the gentleman is. I am going to marry Count Luzzi-Ferrati.'

"I could not help bursting into tears; and throwing myself passionately in her arms, I exclaimed, —

"'Oh, no, no, pray don't! Don't, I beg of you! He is a bad man; he is not honest, — I know he is not. He does n't love you, — I'm sure he does not.'

"'Your behavior pains me more than words can express,' said the princess, pushing me away. 'It is terrible to me to see you yield to this unworthy feeling of jealousy. It convinces me of the wisdom of my plans, however. We must part, Sacha, at least for a while. Ottavio is sure that the climate of Russia would prove almost fatal to me, and advises me to sell all my property there, so we can establish ourselves permanently in Italy. I have decided to do so. Arcadion Sémonovitch is going to Russia to dispose of my property, and you are to accompany him. I hope when you return that your feelings will have changed. You know I cannot form-

ally adopt you before your twenty-first birthday, and then only with Count Luzzi-Ferrati's consent. Consider all this, my child, and try to overcome your foolish prejudice —'

" 'Daria Alexandrovna,' I interrupted impetuously, 'I could once accept anything from you, but that is no longer possible. Thanks to you, I have received an education that will enable me to earn my own living with comparative ease. So far as I myself am concerned, I have no fears. It is for you that I feel so anxious. What will become of you, my dear, dear godmother, when you are in this man's power? Give up all thoughts of this marriage, I beseech you! I see — I feel that Count Luzzi-Ferrati is deceiving you. It is not you that he loves, — it is only your fortune. Tell him you have lost everything, and you will see.'

" 'Hush, child, hush, you break my heart! How can you have got these absurd ideas into your head?' cried the princess, weeping in her turn.

" 'I don't know; but what I say is true, — I know it. Oh, pray listen to me, dear godmother —'

"The princess kissed me tenderly. After sitting, apparently lost in thought, for a few moments, she dried her tears.

" 'I have given my word, Sacha,' she said quietly; 'I cannot retract it. You are mistaken, I assure you. The count is an honorable man. I feel that I can become his wife without any cause for misgivings.'

"What could I say? From that time, the princess treated me with all her former kindness; but it was decided that we should start for Russia without delay. The installation of the newly married pair in the ruined



palace of the Luzzi-Ferrati would necessitate the expenditure of a large sum of money, and M. Békounine was deputed to raise the amount immediately.

“So we came to Moscow. The marriage took place soon after our departure; and I have made up my mind to pass the necessary examination and establish myself here as a teacher. My poor Arcadion Sémonovitch is equally loath to reside with the princess hereafter, so he will live with me on his small income, and we shall soon leave this house, which is already sold, by the way, to take possession of a snug little cottage on the outskirts of the city. So we shall be happy yet, eh, Mitia?”

Sacha dried her eyes as she finished her story, and I could not conceal my joy to find my dear little friend as affectionate and unspoiled as in the days of her childhood. What a busy, happy life we should all lead! Porphyre was delighted; and Sacha, too, was pleased, in spite of her apprehensions in regard to the poor princess.

Before a month had elapsed, the aged baron and Sacha were cosily established in a neat little cottage just outside the city limits. Sacha, who had been very carefully educated, like most young Russian girls of the better class, had already secured two or three pupils; and when our day's work was done, how eagerly we hastened to the cottage to spend a few hours together! One might almost have fancied that the happy days of the past had returned.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MY SYMPHONY.

I WILL not dwell upon my return to the Gymnasium. It was a genuine ovation. Teachers and scholars crowded around me, overwhelming me with protestations of friendship and sympathy.

It was hard to believe that everybody had not been firmly convinced all the while that not I, but Capiton, was the real culprit, though I have often wondered since why they all failed to say anything about it, if that was really their opinion.

Preparations for the final examination must be begun at once. I had devoted many of the long dreary hours of my imprisonment to mentally reviewing nearly all I knew, and I now had the satisfaction of discovering that this period of enforced idleness, far from being a disadvantage, had really refreshed my memory and rendered comprehension less difficult. I would not like to see any one subjected to a similar ordeal, however, for I had spent such anxious and melancholy hours as few lads of my age are called upon to endure.

Six months passed, and almost every day Porphyre and I paid a visit to The Birches, as the little settlement where Baron Békounine and my dear Sacha lived was called. It seemed almost like the country there. Mag-

nificent birches bordered the road, and a venerable tree of the same species shaded the little garden back of the house. The whole place was fresh and neat; and Sacha throve there like a beautiful flower, and the kind-hearted old baron seemed happy and contented in the society and filial affection of his youthful *protégée*. Their only servant was the gray-haired woman I had seen at the city house, and a better and more faithful creature never lived.

Even Népomuk Raabzinsky had fallen a victim to Sacha's charms. I took him to The Birches one evening, and though he grumbled terribly all the way, it was not long before he expressed a desire to go again, and it soon became a habit with him. Sacha bade fair to have a very fine voice, and in spite of his strictures on amateurs, Master Népomuk seemed to take pleasure in cultivating it. He allowed her to sing only classical music of the most severe kind, and rigorously forbade the slightest attempt at ornamentation; but as Sacha's taste agreed perfectly with that of the old maëstro, they had no differences on this score.

Arcadion Sémonovitch, who was himself a great lover of music, and played the violoncello remarkably well, was delighted to make the acquaintance of the famous composer. The two old gentlemen soon took a great liking to each other, and their evening game of chess became a regular institution.

While they were thus engaged near the stove, we young people gathered around the centre table with our books, for that dread examination was still looming grimly up before us. Sacha, too, was studying hard for her examination; but, oh, how much more easily she learned than

I did! Mme. Lebanoff, who was very learned herself, had given her *protégée* a remarkably thorough education, and the mischievous girl laughed at my stupidity just as heartily as in former years. She learned with little or no effort, and seemed to understand everything with marvellous readiness.

"I sha'n't have a word to say for myself, see if I do!" I cried despairingly for the hundredth time, one evening as we three were sitting around the lamp.

"Nonsense!" laughed Sacha. "You mustn't allow yourself to be so discouraged as all that, Mitia. Just say to yourself that you are certainly going to get five<sup>1</sup> in everything, whether or no."

"How can you ridicule me so?"

"By no means. Don't you see, if you are determined to get a five, you will probably get a two or a three; but if you yield to despondency in advance, I won't answer for the consequences."

"That is all very well for people who learn without any effort," I answered bitterly; "but when one is naturally stupid, it's no laughing matter."

She did laugh heartily, nevertheless. As for Porphyre, it was impossible to divert his attention when he was studying. A cannon might have been fired in his ears without disturbing him; and sighing lugubriously, I set to work again.

I had taken Serge to see my friends, who were much pleased with him; and his parents having called shortly afterwards, both households were soon on the most friendly terms, and the Kratkines never seemed to tire of singing my little Sacha's praises.

<sup>1</sup> Five is the highest mark in Russia.

The concluding strains of my symphony had become so clear in my mind during the last night of my imprisonment, that all I had to do afterward was to write them down. The composition was finished now, and I at last decided, though not without many misgivings, to submit it to my instructor.

Entering his apartment one morning, all of a tremble, I placed my manuscript on the rack of the grand piano.

"Master," I said, trying my best to steady my voice, "will you please look at this composition, and tell me what you think of it?"

"Hum!" responded Master Népomuk, with an ominous growl.

Nevertheless, he seated himself at the piano and fixed his sharp, piercing eyes on the page I had opened before him.

"Where did you get this?" he asked abruptly, after glancing over it.

"A — a friend of mine composed it, and desires your opinion of it," I faltered, hoping to divert his suspicions by this transparent fraud; for all my courage had deserted me, and I was trembling before him like a guilty child.

After a still more prolonged and sonorous *Hum!* my master placed his long, dry fingers on the keys and began the symphony.

How can I describe the intoxicating emotions that filled my soul on hearing the melody I had composed rendered with wonderful skill by those illustrious hands? I was sure of myself for the first time. Yes; it was beautiful, it was grand, it was true! These strains came from the very heart of Nature; this wild and yet ethereal melody was really what I had hoped. It was redolent of the



bracing, exhilarating air of the steppes, — of the very spirit of youth and liberty. Népomuk Raabzinsky played the entire score through to the end without once pausing. When he had finished, he turned back to the first page and looked for the name of the composer. I had omitted to place it there, intentionally.

Then he turned his eagle eyes on me. I was standing by his side, blushing and paling by turns.

“Is this yours?” he demanded gravely.

“Yes,” I replied huskily. “I could n’t help writing it, — my head would have burst, if I had n’t. And since I have heard you play it, it seems to me it is beautiful,” I added, venturing to raise my head again.

Népomuk Raabzinsky sprang up in evident agitation. He took several turns up and down the room; then suddenly turning to me, he wrapped his long arms around me and almost crushed me in his embrace. His cheeks as well as his deep-set eyes were wet with tears, as he placed his hand tenderly on my head.

“Give fervent thanks to Heaven, my child,” he said solemnly, “that it has imbued you with its sacred fire; for you possess genius, Dmitri. Woe be unto you if you ever degrade it to base and sordid uses! Suffer, if need be, — drag out your life in abject poverty and misery, — but preserve the immortal fire inviolate. All hail to human genius!” he continued exultantly. “It makes man the peer of the angels of light, — and your place is among these exalted ones. I am proud of you, Dmitri. I thank the Creator, who has allowed a superannuated old man like me to mould a new prince of art. I shall not have lived in vain. Men will say of me: ‘He was Téreentieff’s teacher!’”

On hearing these words, my emotion overpowered me, and I implored him to cease. The thought that he should place me above him caused me such pain that I impetuously declared I would destroy my work; but he ordered me to be silent.

“Hush!” he said imperiously. “It shall never be said of me that I was blind to the talent of others. You have genius. It is no more your fault than it would be if you had been born deaf or an idiot. Come here, here is a page I do not exactly understand.”

He made me explain the whole composition to him, line by line, and page by page. Oh, what a pleasure it was to talk of it without reserve,—to interchange opinions freely with this talented, liberal-minded man! He objected to some passages in my music, finding in the methods of many well-known composers a hundred reasons to censure mine; but when I had explained my conception to him, how vehemently he retracted his words! I attempted to correct one line to which he objected, but he checked me.

“I’ll never speak to you again as long as you live if you alter a note of it!” he cried in a voice of thunder. “Let it remain as you have written it; or at least, let it be corrected only by yourself, and as your own judgment may prompt. This music, recollect, is not Raabzinsky’s music, nor Rubenstein’s, but Térentieff’s; and you should stand ready to do battle for it against the whole world, if you have written it in accordance with the dictates of your own soul and conscience.”

It was thus he had always acted himself, noble, conscientious artist that he was!

“You’ve kept your secret well, you young rascal,” he growled a few minutes afterward. “So you were afraid of



"I AM PROUD OF YOU, DMITRI."



your old master! You thought, perhaps, he would compel you to write music of the old-fashioned, antiquated kind, eh, young man?"

"Say rather I had no confidence in myself, or in the merits of my own composition."

"Simpleton!" he exclaimed, with pretended scorn, "have you neither ear nor feeling? Listen to this."

And he played a few pages of my symphony over again. With what delight I listened! No encomiums ever touched me as deeply as the gruff, outspoken praises of my old master.

"You must let me have this," he said the next day. "I am going to show it to X—— [a famous conductor of orchestral concerts]. I have not yet fallen so low that some few doors are not open to me. Besides, you are young,—that is one thing in your favor. Perhaps you will reach the summit of fame with a single bound. It will not be with you, I hope, as it has been with me, poor old owl! I, alas! had to toil and moil forty years before my talent was conceded, even to a limited extent. You see, my child, when fame comes so late in life it only makes one still more bitter and dissatisfied. You did well not to choose the rôle of actor or clown for the amusement of the fashionable world. Write your *chefs d'œuvre*, and let others scrape away on their violins before the gaping crowd. If they know you only by name, so much the better for you."

He went out, taking my manuscript with him, but returned soon afterwards, highly indignant. The great director had glanced over my composition. He said it was "original," but he absolutely refused to bring it before the public. "We have had too much of this kind of music



already. It is too long, too abstruse, too *Russian*. Ah, if it were only a ballet, now, or even an operetta!"

Népomuk Raabzinsky nearly knocked him down in his rage and disgust. From there, he rushed to the establishments of some of the most prominent publishers of music; but each and every one of them refused to issue my music at their own expense. My master then despatched it to St. Petersburg, but in a few months it was returned as unavailable.

All this did not trouble me very much, however, for my symphony was no sooner finished than another theme took possession of my mind, and I was only waiting until my examination was over to begin work on it.

My last year in the First Class passed with the swiftness of a dream.

The dread ordeal was at hand.

Oh, what a terrible hour was that in which I presented myself tremblingly and despondently before my judges, feeling that the little I had acquired with so much difficulty was leaving me bit by bit! I certainly felt much less frightened when I sat on the prisoners' bench in the crowded court-room.

Around me was a crowd of candidates who had failed in the examination of the previous year; and the sight of their terrified faces and trembling hands would have deprived me of the little presence of mind I had left, if the presence of Serge, who was as calm and composed as ever, had not partially reassured me.

At last the students of Saint-Vladimir were summoned, and we seated ourselves in our turn at the long table, behind which sat the examiners, clad in the University uniform.

Serge is the first in the line. He is questioned, and he replies calmly and clearly. The faces of the examiners, clouded by the stupidity of the unfortunate youths who immediately preceded us, and who are now huddled disconsolately in a corner, become more serene, as they listen to his correct and admirably expressed answers. I shake off the torpor that is creeping over me sufficiently to rejoice at my friend's success, and the sound of his voice seems to brighten up my wits a little. I resolve that I will not be a coward. I have studied my best this last year. Such base pusillanimity as this is unworthy of me. Courage! Avaunt! this grim fear of proving a failure, and forward, Téreentieff, for the honor of Sitovka!

I scrawl these last few words on a slip of paper and pass them to Porphyre. Deeply absorbed in the examination, he imprudently keeps the scrap of paper in his hand some time before he reads it. One of the examiners sees it, and asks him for it. Awaking from his dream, Porphyre gazes in evident bewilderment at the paper, and then hands it to the examiner. That gentleman opens it and reads aloud with a mystified air,—

“Courage! Forward, for the honor of Sitovka!”

Our schoolmates laugh in their sleeves; I am covered with confusion. Neither Porphyre nor the examiners understand this outburst of enthusiasm.

At last my turn comes. I plunge into the fray, and reply with an assurance that amazes me. Courage is born of deadly need, they say. I know it, by experience. I answer every question; and the examination is over before I have had time to tremble.

We learn the result the following day.

Serge received 5 in everything.

Porphyre received 5 in Russian History; 3 in Foreign History; 4 in Science; 1 in German, and 2 in French.

Grichine received 4 in everything.

My success was truly marvellous. I had 5 even in Greek; 5 in French, and, *Mirabile dictu!* 4 in Russian History.

Platon Grégorov failed to pass. He only laughed, however. It was all the same to him. He was about to enter the school of pages, and he was thinking of nothing but his gorgeous new uniform.

Luvine failed ignominiously in everything.

Podnier was acquitting himself admirably, when someone discovered in his watch, which he was opening and shutting in front of him with an abstracted air, a tiny paper, a positive *chef d'œuvre* of patience and microscopic handwriting, containing the answers to the principal questions. He was refused admission, and debarred from future examinations, so he can never again present himself as a candidate at this University.

Sacha passed a brilliant examination. Her marks were excellent.

It was over; we were free. Our course at the Gymnasium was ended.

We all dined with the Kratkines that evening, and I accompanied Sacha and Baron Békounine there. While an elderly servant-woman was assisting Sacha to remove her cloak, she suddenly seized her hand, with a piercing cry. Sacha, greatly frightened, inquired if she had hurt her without being aware of it. She shook her head, and pointed to the bracelet Sacha always wears.

It is a chain of gold and platinum, the gift of Mme. Lebanoff, and attached to it is the little medallion Sacha had about her neck when I found her on the shore of the haunted lake. We all crowded around the old woman to question her, but she only shook her head and wept. At last Mme. Kratkine led her away, and we entered the drawing-room. M. Kratkine examined Sacha's medallion long and carefully; then taking me aside, he asked me a number of questions about my little Sacha. I told him all I knew, and he jotted down the date and a few notes in his memorandum-book. Though the incident created quite an excitement at the time, nothing came of it, and it was soon forgotten.

We shall be University students soon, and wear the famous uniform with blue *revers* and a jaunty little sword. All three of us have decided to study law, though Porphyre has a secret *penchant* for theology. I chose law because Serge is going to study it, and Porphyre, I think, because I chose it.

Our pleasant vacation is affording us the rest we all need after the hard work of the past year. My symphony continues to be rejected everywhere; but none of my friends seem to lose faith in me on that account, nor do I lose faith in myself, though it may sound presumptuous in me to say so.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### A STRANGE WEDDING-GIFT.— CONCLUSION.

OUR law studies began as soon as we entered the University; and I must confess that while I was endeavoring to initiate myself into the mysteries of Russian law, I often sighed heavily at the thought of my neglected music, for I could not devote myself to it now, as I had done in the past. I was obliged to live, and also to prepare myself to earn my living in the future. "Not until my fortune is made," I often said to myself, "can I allow myself time for musical composition,—for imbuing with life all the sprightly, melancholy, or weird fancies that are continually haunting me."

I had selected for the subject of the opera I meant to write some day the legend of Sir Launcelot, which I found in an old French book, and which made a deep impression on me. Whenever I had a few minutes to spare, I seized pen and paper and composed a few bars. My symphony had given me a great deal of trouble; but it did not take me long to discover that the composition of an opera, with its choruses, its many different rôles, important and unimportant, its orchestral effects and ballet, was a much more difficult and laborious task. But with what joy I devoted myself to it! The great English poet was certainly right when he said: "The labor we delight in physics pain." When I had an opportunity to



thus indulge myself, I became completely oblivious to everything that was going on around me; I should even have forgotten to eat or sleep if my faithful Porphyre had not brought me back to the realities of life.

And this reminds me that when we put on the *toga virilis*, or, in other words, the dark blue uniform of the University students, with a cap rakishly perched on one ear, and a sword about the size of a darning needle, my friend Porphyre's character underwent a sudden and complete transformation.

I admit that we all assumed a rather pompous air when we donned our uniforms, and that it was with no little secret pride I twirled my budding mustache and fingered the handle of my sword as I sallied forth from my lodgings; but my airs and graces were as nothing in comparison with those Porphyre assumed.

Do you recollect the time when you neglected your dress so shamefully, O Porphyre Agathonovitch; when you entertained such an insurmountable dread of water; when you wore patched clothing, and heavy boots that you kept copiously greased with mutton tallow? And now, to think of your being suddenly metamorphosed into a dude of the most pronounced type! No tailor could satisfy you as to fit, or make the garments that covered your stalwart limbs tight enough; and your fastidious godfather, proud of your success, having allowed you a certain amount per month for your expenses, we strongly suspected you of spending the greater part of it in the purchase of perfumes, neckties, pointed-toed shoes, and white gloves, — to say nothing of the hairdresser, who must have extorted incredible sums from you, judging from the many hours you spent at his establishment.

We noticed too—

That Porphyre's bearing had become exceedingly airy and affected, and came to the conclusion that he must be taking dancing lessons;

That he never appeared on the street without a glass in his right eye, although his oldest friends had never before suspected him of being at all near-sighted;

That he had fallen into a habit of star-gazing;

That he was wont to heave ponderous sighs upon all occasions; and that his eyes, probably from being so often directed heavenward, had assumed a dreamy expression not at all in harmony with the dear fellow's florid complexion and pug nose.

Of course, we marvelled greatly at this wonderful change; but when we attempted to question him concerning the cause of it, he maintained a sullen silence, and no one ever succeeded in extorting any explanation from him.

The months and years passed slowly but peacefully by. Our course of study at the University was drawing to a close; and it would soon be necessary for me to come to a final decision in regard to a profession. The more I studied law, the less I liked it; music was my one absorbing passion, and it seemed to me that I really lived only while I was composing. My symphony had been on my hands a long time. Tired of offering it to Russian publishers, who refused it with remarkable unanimity, Maëstro Népomuk,—who had many friends in Paris,—finally decided to send it there; and though I was not very sanguine, I made no objection. Everywhere in Russia we had received the same response: "The music is too abstract, too complicated, too profound. The

public must be amused. If a young man wishes to succeed, he must begin by writing something light and delicate,—not attempt to take people by storm, as it were. After he has made his reputation, he can be as eccentric and display as much individuality as he pleases.”

These criticisms excited my old master's intense indignation. I think he even found it hard to forgive me for having written a little book of popular songs, which a publisher accepted, and which yielded me a small sum of money. Though I in no wise transgressed the laws of my beloved art in what I wrote, I confined myself to transcribing the simple and charming melodies one hears in our fields and forests; and they proved an immediate success. The publisher having purchased my manuscript for a stipulated amount, I had no share in the profits he subsequently derived from it; but I have often been told, and I have since had an opportunity to see for myself, that my collection of folk-songs has a place in almost every Russian household.

After Sacha's graduation, she had no difficulty in securing older pupils, and she was now earning her own living bravely,—loved and respected alike by old and young,—the acknowledged queen of our little circle. One June evening—how distinctly I remember it!—Sacha, Arcadion Sémonovitch, Maëstro Népomuk, and I were sitting in the parlor of her little cottage. The two old gentlemen were enjoying their daily game of chess; and Sacha, seated at the piano, was softly humming an air from my opera, which I had brought for her to try.

Suddenly there was a quick ring of the door-bell.

“A telegram for Professor Raabzinsky, forwarded from his house,” said old Mikoulinia.

The maëstro hastily tore open the envelope and glanced at the contents; then, with an exclamation of delight, he handed it to me.

The words that greeted my eager eyes were as follows:

PARIS, June 4.

Symphony accepted. Will be performed at the Conservatory as soon as the composer can come to direct the rehearsals. Travelling expenses paid. The symphony will be published under the supervision of the composer, immediately after the first rendition.

Our delight can be imagined, but hardly described. In his rapture, the maëstro ruffled his long hair more wildly than ever, and even promised to come in person to witness my triumph,—for that it would be a triumph was almost certain now. I was profoundly happy, for I had been more deeply pained than I was willing to admit to see my work rejected by every one, and sometimes I had almost lost confidence in myself; but now, what an enchanting future I saw opening before me!

“It is to you that I am indebted for this good fortune, Maëstro Népomuk,” I exclaimed, seizing him by the hand.

“Nonsense, nonsense!” he replied gayly; “I taught you counterpoint, it is true,—and gave you many a sound cuff in the bargain; but the sacred fire—was it I who gave you that? One can do nothing without that. You have it, my boy; I said so the first time I heard you sing. But now you have made a good start, don’t allow yourself to loiter by the way; in other words, don’t think to rest upon your laurels, or pander to the depraved taste

of the day. Never forget the reverence due to your art, Dmitri. Never forget that, and set to work as you have never worked before."

"When will you start?" inquired Arcadion Sémonovitch.

The question startled me. What! leave Moscow, leave Sacha!

Without pausing to answer our old friend's question, I took Sacha by the hand and led her out into the little garden.

"Sacha, dear Sacha," I said eagerly, "if I must go, tell me first that you will consent to share my fortunes, and become my wife,—the wife of a poor musician who has neither money nor lands to offer you, but who can accomplish wonders, it seems to me, if he is blessed with the hope of having you for his wife some day. Tell me, does my poverty frighten you; or will you indeed accept me for your husband?"

"Dmitri," she replied, with her clear, true eyes looking straight up into mine, "with you, I fear nothing. It is the thought of separation that dismays me; but if I know it is only for a short time, I shall be resigned, and wait for you courageously, even contentedly, sustained by a certainty of your return at no distant day."

I was about to imprint a tender kiss upon the brow of my dear betrothed when the sound of approaching footsteps made us both turn our heads.

"So I've found you at last!" exclaimed Porphyre, for it was he who was advancing toward us. "I could n't imagine what had become of you!"

I told him that my symphony had been accepted at last, and that I should soon be obliged to leave for Paris.



Poor old Porphyre! It certainly must have been his evil genius that suddenly impelled him to seat himself between us, and take each of us by the hand.

"Listen to me, my dear friends," he said, heaving a portentous sigh; "I have had a heavy load upon my mind for a long time, and as you are going away, Dmitri, I can be silent no longer. Are you not both companions of my childhood,—my only friends? Dmitri, I can certainly speak without restraint before you; and when I beseech Sacha to grant me her hand in marriage, I feel sure that you will not be the one to object, my brother—my—"

"On the contrary, I am the one, the very one. You certainly make a mistake,—a very great mistake," I responded angrily.

"What do you mean?" inquired Porphyre, with an expression of seraphic sweetness.

"This is really too much," I continued, deeply exasperated.

"If I had had the slightest suspicion of your preference, my dear Porphyre, I should certainly have given you some inkling of the real facts of the case," interrupted Sacha, soothingly; "but I had no idea that you had thus honored me, so you will not be angry with me, I am sure, when I tell you that I am already betrothed. We shall remain the same good friends, I trust, as you said a few minutes ago. Old playmates like ourselves do not change in their feelings; they—"

"Who is he? Tell me his name!" cried Porphyre, frantically.

"Come, come, Porphyre, calm yourself. Don't put on such a tragical air, I beg of you. Who could it be but—but Dmitri!"



"IT IS TO MY DEAR SACHA THAT I DEDICATE THESE RECOL-  
LECTIONS OF MY LIFE."



"You!" exclaimed Porphyre, "you! He! he!" he repeated, even more tragically. Springing to his feet, he paced wildly to and fro a few minutes; then, after having returned to us and uttered in lugubrious tones the familiar words, "*It's just my luck,*" he walked rapidly away, leaving us thoroughly uncomfortable.

Fortunately, the arrival of Serge a few minutes afterwards changed the current of our thoughts.

We told him the good news; and how cordially he congratulated us! How thoroughly he seemed to share our happiness! I believe he even guessed the cause of Sacha's glowing cheeks and radiant eyes, though he made no allusion to his suspicions.

I left for France the following week, and two months after my arrival in Paris my symphony was performed at the Conservatory. What a blissful hour it was for me when I heard this creation of my brain rendered with exquisite skill before a large and appreciative audience! I was almost overwhelmed with admiration for my own work, and could hardly refrain from joining in the enthusiastic applause that burst forth as the last note died away. Why should I not admit that it was a great success? The composer was called for again and again; and the next morning, I could truly say, with Byron, —

"I woke and found myself famous."

Those were halcyon days that I spent in that magnificent city, so well adapted to the needs and tastes of a musician in many ways. I was everywhere welcomed with a kindness and cordiality that charmed me, and made me dearly love France and her people. The publication of my symphony was begun at once, and every day

I received proofs, which I spent many delightful hours in correcting. Upon the title-page was engraved the name of my honored instructor, to whom I had dedicated it; and I had a copy printed on silver-edged vellum for Sacha. With what joy and pride I gazed at the ornamental letters of the title, "The Steppes," before sending it to my dear betrothed! With what tenderness I inscribed her dear name on the spotless page!

Only a few days more, and I should see her and my beloved country again.

Soon after my arrival in Paris, I received a magnanimous letter from Porphyre, in which he assured me that he never could or would have consented to relinquish Sacha to any one but me. He also announced that his elder brother having refused to become a priest, he himself was about to abandon his law studies forever, and immure himself in a monastery. This gloomy resolve pained me a little; but I consoled myself with the assurance that he would soon think better of it.

I returned to Moscow, and my marriage with Sacha took place the following spring. Porphyre, who seemed to have entirely recovered from his disappointment, and Serge acted as groomsmen on the eventful day.

When Sacha, veiled in fleecy tulle, and radiantly beautiful in her bridal robes, entered the little parlor where a small party of faithful and devoted friends was awaiting her, M. Kratkine stepped forward, and imprinting a fatherly kiss on her forehead, presented her with a bulky, official-looking envelope.

"This is my wedding present, my dear children," he said. "It could not be got ready any sooner."

Sacha opened the envelope with trembling fingers, for



our friend's tone and manner strangely excited us. In it she found a sheet of parchment covered with official stamps and seals.

It was a certificate of the birth and baptism of Leïla Alexeeïevna Bérézoff, daughter of Alexis Ivanovitch Bérézoff and Leïla his wife, daughter of Kouldja, a Tartar chief of Trans-Caucasia.

We were speechless with astonishment.

"It is the certificate of your own birth, my dear child," continued M. Kratkine. "You are the only child of Alexis Ivanovitch Bérézoff, brother of Nicholas Bérézoff, and the friend and schoolmate of Dmitri's father."

M. Kratkine then told us how his attention had been first called to Sacha's locket by Katia, an old servant who was now in his employ, but who had been in her youth the nurse of the Bérézoff boys. They were twins, and resembled each other so closely in their infancy, that their mother and their nurse could distinguish them only by two lockets bearing their initials, which they always wore around their necks. After they grew up, they continued to wear the lockets under their clothing. M. Kratkine had procured the one belonging to Nicholas Ivanovitch, and now showed it to us. It was precisely like Sacha's in every particular except the initials, which were N. I. B., instead of A. I. B., as on hers.

For several months M. Kratkine had been quietly collecting the necessary proofs of my bride's parentage, but had said nothing to us about it, as he wished to spare us unnecessary anxiety and possible disappointment. He had discovered, not without great difficulty, however, and many long and tedious researches, that Alexis Ivano-

vitch Bérézoff, while travelling in Asia, had fallen into the hands of a Tartar tribe that was then at war with Russia. The chief's daughter Leïla fell in love with the handsome Russian, and resolved to save him. She succeeded; and they fled together, and were married shortly afterward by a priest of the Greek Church. After a long pursuit, old Kouldja, Leïla's father, and her brothers succeeded in recapturing the fugitives, who lived with the tribe, closely guarded, for more than a year. A little daughter was born to them, and received the name of Leïla Alexeïevna. But the health of Alexis Ivanovitch, always delicate, gave way during this enforced exile, and shortly after his daughter's birth he died of a slow fever.

The parents of the young widow began to tyrannize over her worse than ever, and her life became intolerable. When his granddaughter was about three years of age, old Kouldja took it into his head to marry his daughter to a neighboring chief and ally. Driven to desperation, poor Leïla resolved to flee to her husband's brother, of whom she had often heard Alexis speak in terms of the deepest affection. Before his death, her husband had given her the locket he always wore, assuring her that his brother would certainly recognize it. The young widow succeeded in making her escape, and joined a roving band of Cossacks that was about returning to Russia. Fatigue and privations compelled her to pause, in the last stages of exhaustion, on the borders of the steppes, not far from the village of Sitovka.

"You know the rest," added M. Kratkine.

It was impossible to doubt the truth of these statements. The dates and all needful proofs were before us.

Sacha was not only the daughter of Alexis Ivanovitch, and niece of the benefactor I had so unfortunately lost on my arrival in Moscow, but she was also the sole heir to the large Bérézoff property.

We spend most of our time in Sitovka, in the home of our childhood, which we have rebuilt and enlarged so that it will easily accommodate all the dear friends who were so kind to us in our hours of adversity; and it is with sincere regret that we leave it when we are obliged to go to Moscow, Paris, or St. Petersburg to superintend the rendition of my works.

Our old friend Arcadion Sémonovitch lives with us; and Maëstro Népomuk spends his summers under our roof. He is as eccentric as ever; but his temper has been greatly improved by association with my Sacha, for so we continue to call her in memory of my dear father, who gave her that name.

Porphyre very sensibly abandoned the idea of burying himself in a monastery; and celibacy not being enjoined upon our priests,—the Greek Church even insisting, as a general rule, that candidates for the priesthood shall marry before they take orders,—he married the eldest daughter of our old friend Tatiana. His wife is a real Russian beauty, with flaxen hair, blue eyes, and rosy cheeks; and Porphyre seems to be very happy, and much more lucky than in former years.

Grichine is a prominent physician in Moscow. He is a rising man in his profession; but he has not accumulated a fortune, and never will. He is too generous to the poor.

Serge entered the diplomatic service, where his many

and versatile talents have already gained him an enviable distinction.

We met the Princess Lebanoff during one of our recent visits to Paris, and the poor lady evinced the greatest delight on seeing Sacha again. The count, her husband, has proved himself well worthy of my dear wife's distrust. He is a thoroughly heartless and unscrupulous man, who has impoverished his wife to pay his gambling debts.

My faithful dog Snap is still alive. He is as devoted and affectionate as ever; but his sight is dim, and old age weighs heavily upon him. We cannot hope to keep him with us much longer.

I have never heard anything more in relation to Capiton Strodtmann.

It is to my dear Sacha, the companion of my youth, the inspiration of my manhood, my beloved wife, that I dedicate these recollections of my life.











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